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HOW ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS PERCEIVE
THE CHANGES IN THEIR ROLES AND
THEIR SCHOOLS AS A RESULT OF
MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATION REFORM

A Dissertation Presented

by

NANCY R. SPITULNIK

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 2001

School of Education

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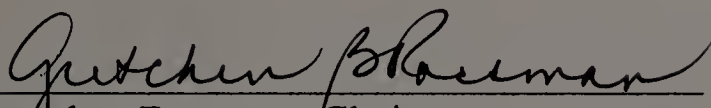
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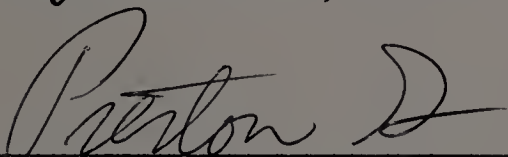
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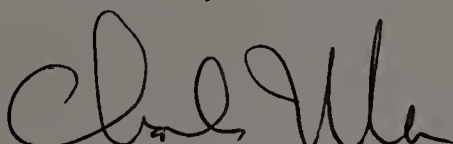
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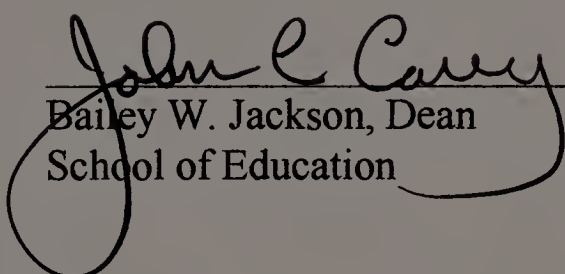
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writing of a doctoral dissertation and the years of study leading up to this document are a long, long journey involving much time and effort. This process would have been impossible without the constant support and enthusiasm of the many special people in my life.

My first thanks go to my loyal family, who have put up with so much to give me the time to complete this project. Thank you to my husband, Jay, and my children Harry, Alyssa, and Matthew, for your years of endurance, patience, and encouragement in seeing me through to the end of this project.

A sincere thank you to the members of my committee for their patience and support through this long process: Dr. Gretchen Rossman, chair, and Dr. Preston Green and Dr. Charlie Moran. Your comments and suggestions have been invaluable in helping me sort out my sometimes unfocused thoughts in order to get to the heart of what I wanted to say.

Many thanks to the other people in my life who have nudged me gently to stay on track and not give up: to Patricia Walsh, a true friend through many years of ups and downs, who was my first mentor when I started teaching; to Dr. Stephen Dlott, an inspiring, collaborative superintendent, who gave me the time and encouragement to finish this dissertation; to the memory of Dr. Jack Doherty, a superintendent who always encouraged me to keep going; and to DR. Rose Ellis, who got there first, but has been an inspiration and source of much motivation and wonderful discussions about principals

and Ed. Reform. Special thanks to Betsy Krentzman, who is more than just a secretary, for her friendship and support and flowers, and for keeping me going on a daily basis.

To my parents, Mike and Vivian Nathan - you gave me a true sense of purpose and inspiration to make the world a better place. I will always be grateful to you for my upbringing. To the memories of my father- and mother-in-law, Harry and Rissel Spitulnik - I know that you would be proud of me and the continuing accomplishments of our family.

Thanks to the many teachers and school staff members who have worked with me over the years. You have taught me a lot about children and education, and I hope I've served you equally as well. I have the highest regard for the continuing hard work you do in the face of much adversity. Thanks also to the elementary principals who participated in this study by returning a questionnaire, and who allowed me to interview you during your very busy day. A special recognition needs to go to all the principals in all the schools in Massachusetts. Your dedication to your job, your students, your staff, your parents, and your community is outstanding.

I dedicate this work to Katie, a strong little girl who has fought hard to come back from insurmountable odds. Keep on fighting, Katie - you're an inspiration to all of us!

ABSTRACT

HOW ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS PERCEIVE THE CHANGES IN THEIR ROLES AND THEIR SCHOOLS AS A RESULT OF MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATION REFORM

FEBRUARY 2001

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This study investigated Massachusetts elementary principals' perceptions of the changes in their leadership roles as a result of the implementation of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. This study also examined how principals perceived the effectiveness of the Reform Act - what they saw as positive results, what obstacles continue to exist, and what they would change to make education reform more effective. As an elementary principal, the researcher was in a unique position to engage fellow principals in a dialogue about Education Reform, and analyze and comment on principals' perceptions.

As leaders in their schools, principals are in a key position to report on the changes they have seen in their jobs and their schools as a result of educational reform. With restructuring efforts concentrated at individual schools, principals become the pivotal people to initiate and direct change. Recognizing the importance of the principal in implementing reforms, the Reform Act legislated many changes in the authority and the

role of the principal. These changes included greater accountability for student achievement, more authority over staff hiring and firing, and a mandate to establish participatory decision-making involving teachers, parents, and the community. At the same time, the Reform Act took away many aspects of a principal's job security by eliminating tenure, forbidding collective bargaining, and downgrading the standard for dismissal.

This study found that these changes have had both positive and negative effects on principals and their schools. Positive effects as reported by principals included a focus on a consistent curriculum, higher learning standards, increased accountability for learning, increased communication and collaboration, and a push for schools to make needed changes. Negative effects included loss of job security, an increase in job demands and time commitments, increased stress, and inadequate support for principals.

Other obstacles to effective reform cited by principals were teachers' unions, the perceived negativity and lack of support from the State Board of Education and the legislature, and the continuing power of superintendents and school committees. Principals in this study also made many recommendations for changes they felt would increase the effectiveness of reform efforts in Massachusetts.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The issue of reforming public education in the United States has been a constant source of discussion for many years. The last eighteen years has been especially notable for attacks on American schools, starting with the key document, “A Nation at Risk,” published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983. A study of the major educational reform documents since then shows a remarkably similar set of recommendations for improving schools in the United States. Yet the implementation of these recommendations to bring about effective, whole-scale school reform has yet to be accomplished.

A major change in the approach to school reform occurred in the late 1980’s with the emergence of “restructuring.” Conley (1993b) defines restructuring as “those activities that change fundamental assumptions, practices, and relationships, both within the organization and between the organization and the outside world, in ways that lead to improved student learning” (p.8-9). Restructuring focuses on changes within each individual school, with the stated outcome of improving student learning for all students. Restructuring also requires changes in power relationships as schools move to a site-based management approach, emphasizing the empowerment of teachers and administrators over the previous power of school committees and state and federal governments.

With restructuring efforts concentrated at individual school sites, the principal becomes the pivotal person to initiate, organize, and direct the changes that need to take

place. “The role of the principal receives special attention because it offers the single most immediate route to school reform” (Carlin, 1992, p.46). Research studies have shown a direct correlation between the role of principals and the effectiveness of school reform in their buildings (Blase, 1993; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood, 1992). Heck and Marcoulides (1993) report that “the manner in which elementary and high school principals govern the school, build strong school climate, and organize and monitor the school’s instructional program are important predictors of academic achievement” (p.25).

William Spady (1998) calls this change in thinking a “paradigm shift” that “change(s) the fundamental nature of everything known and done previously” (p.3). Spady also recognizes the important role that school leaders play in spearheading this change in educational thinking, stating that such shifts in education are “reliant upon school leaders willing to thoughtfully examine the paradigm of schooling” (p.2).

This emphasis on the role of principals as key change-agents in educational restructuring has added to the complexity and difficulty of their jobs. Principals are expected to take on new responsibilities and leadership tasks such as developing a vision and goals for the school, implementing new curriculums and assessments, building site-based management teams, collaborating and communicating with parents and the community, supervising staff professional development activities, and taking greater responsibility for control of budgets and staff hiring and firing. All of these tasks have added stress and uncertainty to the job of principals as they work to find time to implement all these new expectations, while at the same time communicating with and pleasing an ever-growing and demanding constituency.

The changing role of the principal as a result of restructuring efforts is well documented in the literature (Fullan, 1991; Goldman, et al, 1993; Lieberman & Miller, 1990). Peterson and Warren (1994) give as examples of this change the principal's increased role in coordinating the work of others; managing more political activities, such as facilitating, bargaining, and persuading; finding new ways to exert power such as increased expertise, social influence, and personal charisma; and an increased role in managing conflict as a mediator, problem-solver, and conflict-resolver.

While the important role of the principal in implementing effective educational reforms has been noted in the literature since the 1960's effective school movement, there is little dialogue or research documenting the views and experiences of principals as they lead their schools in these reform efforts. As stated by Gerald Tirozzi, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals and former assistant U.S. secretary of education, "While we seemed to involve every other group and organization, the principalship pretty much seemed to be left out of the discourse" (Olson, 2000, p.16). Yet the principal is in a unique position to observe and comment on the effectiveness of and continuing obstacles to reform at the very site where reforms are being implemented.

Statement of the Problem

In Massachusetts, the Education Reform Act of 1993 legislated many changes in the authority and the role of the principal, recognizing the importance of this position in implementing reform efforts. The general impact of the Act on principals was to give them more authority in their buildings over staff hiring and firing, greater accountability

for the successful education of their students and efficient operation of their schools, and a mandate to establish participatory decision-making involving teachers, parents, and the community. At the same time, the Act took away many aspects of a principal's job security by eliminating tenure, forbidding collective bargaining, and downgrading the standard for his/her dismissal from "just cause" to "good cause." (See Chapter 2, pages 21-22 for more detailed information on Education Reform Act provisions.)

As leaders and change-agents in their schools, principals are in a unique position to analyze the impact of the Education Reform Act. What do principals in Massachusetts see as the greatest changes in their roles and their schools, both positive and negative, as a result of the Reform Act? What do they see as the major obstacles to effective educational reform, and what would they change to make education reform more effective?

Other cities and states, such as Chicago and Kentucky, have undergone intensive education reform processes, with many recommendations and changes similar to those in Massachusetts. A search of the literature yields comprehensive studies that have been done in those localities to assess the impact and perceptions of principals to the changes that have so dramatically impacted their lives (Bennett, et. al., 1992; Ford, 1991; Kentucky Department of Education, 1995). However, no comparable studies were found that analyzed the changes that principals have experienced in Massachusetts as a result of the Education Reform Act. As the leaders in their schools, principals are in a unique position to report on the changes they have seen in their jobs and their schools as a result

of the Education Reform Act, and to comment on their perceptions of the effectiveness of this reform.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated Massachusetts elementary principals' perceptions of the changes in their leadership roles as a result of the implementation of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. In addition, this study examined the perceptions of principals as to the effectiveness of the Education Reform Act - what they feel is working well in their schools, what hasn't worked, what obstacles continue to exist, and what they would change to make education reform more effective.

The following research questions drive this study, focusing on key aspects of the Education Reform Act, as well as over-all perceptions of principals as to the effectiveness of the Act.

- Question 1: Collaboration and Time

Given that the Massachusetts Education Reform Act seeks to promote increased collaboration and site-based management, how do elementary principals in Massachusetts perceive changes in collaboration in their schools due to Education Reform, and how has this effected the time spent on their jobs?

- Question 2: Vision and Leadership

Given that the Massachusetts Education Reform Act promotes principals as leaders of change in their schools, how do elementary principals perceive their leadership and visionary roles under Education Reform?

- Question 3: Massachusetts Education Reform Provisions

Given that the Massachusetts Education Reform Act changed many of the working conditions of principals, how do elementary principals in Massachusetts perceive these changes as they relate to their job performance?

- Question 4: Principal Support and Stress

Given that the Massachusetts Education Reform Act has changed working conditions and increased responsibilities for principals, how have elementary principals in Massachusetts coped with these changes and what support do they feel for the job they are doing?

- Question 5: Student Learning

Given that the purpose of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act was to raise the standard of learning for students, how do elementary principals in Massachusetts perceive that the role they play under Education Reform has improved student learning in their schools?

- Question 6: Changes and Obstacles

Given that the role of the principal is key to many of the changes and advances proposed under the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, how do elementary principals in Massachusetts perceive the effectiveness of the Act, what obstacles do they see to effective reform, and what changes would they suggest to bring about more effective reform?

Significance of the Study

Given the importance of the principals' role in implementing reforms in Massachusetts, a study of their perceptions and ability to function as educational leaders should be of great importance to legislators, the Board of Education, and support groups such as MESPA (Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association). The success or failure of this important piece of legislation may well rest with the ability of principals to implement the Reform Act. A study of how principals are managing the changes in their roles is important for legislators and educators in order to assess the effectiveness of the Education Reform Act, and provide information for possible modifications to the law that will further its implementation. A study of the tensions and stressors created by the changes in principals' roles, as well as the strategies they employ to manage this stress, will provide insight into future training and supports that could be provided for principals to improve their effectiveness as educational leaders in their schools.

The perceptions of principals gleaned from this study will also provide information on other factors that impact the implementation of Education Reform, such as the role of the superintendent and teacher's unions. Information on these factors will be useful to legislators and the State Board of Education as they assess possible changes in the law when it comes up for review in June, 2000.

Definition of Terms

Board of Education: A group composed of state leaders and 13 members appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts that oversees the work of the State Department of Education, and appoints and supervises the Commissioner of Education.

Commissioner of Education: Supervises and manages the State Department of Education, and oversees public education in Massachusetts. The Commissioner is appointed by the Board of Education.

Curriculum frameworks: Academic standards/curriculum developed by the Massachusetts State Department of Education as a result of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 in the core subjects of mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, English/language arts, foreign/world languages, and the arts.

Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993: Comprehensive school reform law passed by the legislature in 1993 focusing on equitable funding for schools, academic and school performance standards, site-based management, and certification of personnel. The Education Reform Act changed the role of school principals, giving them greater authority for the management and operation of their schools.

MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System): Standardized tests developed to measure student understanding of the learning standards in the curriculum frameworks. Starting in 2003, passage of the tenth grade MCAS will be necessary in order for seniors to graduate from high school.

MESPA: Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association

Professional status: Granted to teachers after their third year of successful teaching in a public school, giving them more formal job security and contractual rights. The Education Reform Act replaced “tenure” with “professional status.”

Restructuring: A school reform initiative that requires fundamental changes to all parts of the educational system - assumptions, practices, and relationships - and is driven by a focus on student learning.

School climate: The general working atmosphere of a school building, including areas such as collegiality, vision, collaboration, communication, and empowerment.

School Council: A school-based team established by the Education Reform Act composed of the principal, teachers, parents, and community representatives. The School Council acts as an advisory board to the principal, sets school goals, identifies the educational needs of students, reviews the school budget, and develops an annual School Improvement Plan.

School Improvement Plan: A written document prepared annually by the School Council that outlines school goals, safety procedures, parental involvement, and means for meeting the diverse learning needs of students.

Site-based management: Participation of key stake-holders in decisions that effect the school, including teachers, parents, students, and the community.

Delimitations of the Study

The focus of the study was education reform in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Conclusions drawn from this study may not be able to be generalized to

other states or regions of the country. The study was also limited to elementary principals, and may not be applicable to perceptions of secondary principals.

The study utilized in-depth interviewing which reflects the attitudes and perceptions of the individual participants. These observations may not generalize to other principals in Massachusetts. Upon completion of the study, it was noted that responses from urban participants were under-represented, especially from the City of Boston. The conclusions of the study may therefore not fully represent the views of principals from urban areas.

Outline of the Study

Chapter II of this study presents an overview of the history of educational reform, with a focus on top-down versus bottom-up reform initiatives, and the emergence of restructuring as an effective model for bringing about systemic educational change. The importance of the principal as the leader of school change emerges from the literature, with documentation of characteristics of effective principals, principal roles in restructuring, changes in the role of the principal, and the leadership paradox brought about by restructuring efforts.

Chapter III describes the design and methodology of the dissertation, sample selection, procedures, and data analysis. Chapter IV presents and analyzes the results of the principal survey and in-depth interviews as they relate to the research questions. Chapter V discusses conclusions that can be drawn from the data. Recommendations are made for changes or improvements to the Education Reform Act to bring about more effective reforms in Massachusetts. Suggestions for future research initiatives are also

detailed that would provide further information on the effective implementation of the Education Reform Act.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In order to more fully understand the changes in the role of the principal brought about by restructuring and education reform, it is necessary to have a background in the history of the education reform movement and the changes in educational philosophy that have taken place, especially in the last fifteen years. This chapter will review the literature and research as it relates to the history of school reform, describe the emergence of the restructuring movement that changed the focus of school reform, investigate the important role of the principal as the leader of school reform, and discuss the changing role of the principal as a result of the new reform initiatives.

History of School Reform

National Reform Initiatives

A study of the educational reform movement in the United States in the last 17 years starts with the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, published by The National Commission on Excellence in Education in April, 1983. This report stunned the nation by depicting education in the United States falling behind the rest of the world. The first paragraph of the report states:

Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world...the educational foundations of our society are presently being erodedWhat was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur -- others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments. (p.5)

The Commission blamed this decline in education on the ineffective structures within our nation's schools, concluding that the curriculum had been "homogenized, diluted, and diffused" (p.18), expectations for learning had been lowered, time on learning was inadequate, and teacher training and salaries were below acceptable standards. Four main recommendations were put forth: strengthen high school graduation requirements and admission to college, increase standards and expectations for student performance, lengthen the school day and school year, and "generally hold students and educators more accountable" (Lunenburg, 1992, p.3).

The response of the American public to *A Nation at Risk* was to enact over 700 pieces of school reform legislation in the period between 1983 and 1985. These statutes focused on "top-down" reforms based on stricter standards and increasing accountability by teachers and educators (Futrell, 1990; Lunenburg, 1992).

By 1986, a second wave of school reform initiatives began to invade the country. Publication of works such as Ernest Boyer's *High School* (1983), TheodoreSizer's *Horace Compromise* (1984), and John Goodlad's *A Place Called School* (1984) questioned the very structure of educational practices in the classroom. While all three studies agreed that the nation's schools needed to be reformed, their conclusions were that schools needed to be reformed from the bottom-up. Boyer stressed the need for teacher empowerment, interdisciplinary core curriculums, and closer cooperation among schools, businesses, and the community as the basis for successful reform (Goldberg, 1995; Lunenburg, 1992).Sizer's studies concluded that the structure of current high schools resembled the structure of 19th century high schools, and called for interdisciplinary core

curriculums, active learning geared to students' needs, and the need for site-based decision making at each school (Conley, 1993b; Lunenberg, 1992; O'Neil, 1995).

Goodlad's study looked at all grade levels K-12, unlike Boyer andSizer who had focused just on high school. Goodlad concluded that students were rarely engaged directly in their own learning. Teachers spent most of their time lecturing, especially at the secondary level (Sarason, 1990; Schlechty, 1990). Schools spent too much time on a "preoccupation with the lower intellectual processes" (Goodlad, p.236) at the expense of higher-order thinking skills. Goodlad also found that, in general, there is a sameness to the learning experience across the country. He wrote:

Schools differ; schooling is everywhere very much the same. Schools differ in the way they conduct their business and in the way the people in them relate to one another in conducting that business. But the business of schooling is everywhere very much the same. (p.264)

Goodlad stated that accountability for education needed to be balanced in authority and responsibility between the states and local districts. States should set goals for education, but the districts should have the responsibility for communicating and meeting those goals. Goodlad stated:

It is reasonable for states to assess the way districts conduct their business. But to seek to monitor from remote state capitals the activities and performance of individual schools and teachers is unrealistic and ultimately damaging. This is a district responsibility. (p.274-75)

This "second wave" of bottom-up educational reform was heralded in 1986 by the publication of three important reports: *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, (Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986), *Tomorrow's Teachers* (The Holmes Group, 1986), and *Time for Results* (National Governor's

Association [NGA],1986). These reports changed the focus of educational reform from external standards imposed on schools to what takes place in the actual classroom (Lunenberg, 1992; Murphy, 1992), with the realization that sound reform of educational practices needed to be in the hands of educators, not legislators.

The common wisdom is that the first wave of educational reform, initiated by *A Nation at Risk*...was characterized by the imposition of top-down reforms that essentially asked us to do more of the same but to do it better. The second wave of educational reform, perhaps best exemplified by the Holmes Group Report, *Tomorrow's Teachers*...and by the Carnegie Forum Report, *A Nation Prepared*...was characterized by a recognition of the systemic nature of the educational enterprise and the necessity of putting the teacher at the center of educational reform. (Petrie, 1990, p.14)

The Holmes Group report stated that “we cannot improve the quality of education in our schools without improving the quality of the teachers in them” (p.23). This report called on colleges and universities to explore their teacher education programs and make needed changes in order to improve the quality of teaching in the classroom.

The Carnegie Task Force report focused on teachers as the source for needed reform in education, calling for “a profession of well-educated teachers prepared to assume new powers and responsibilities to redesign schools for the future” (Carnegie Task Force, p.2).

The major recommendations of both reports are remarkably similar:

- Create higher standards for teacher certification.
- Restructure schools to provide a professional environment for teachers, including greater autonomy for teachers to make educational decisions.
- Restructure the teaching force based on teacher competencies, with the addition of categories such as “lead” or “master” teacher.

- Restructure teacher college education to include subject matter on instruction and reflective practices.
- Increase recruitment and training of minority teachers.

These reports moved the focus of educational reform from a top-down, bureaucratic level to a local, “grass-roots” responsibility for changing the nature of education (Murray, 1986; Tucker and Mandel, 1986).

The second wave called for reform efforts that brought together teachers, principals, superintendents, school boards, parents, and business and community leaders in collaborative efforts to renew and improve their schools. The local school was seen as the focus to reform initiatives that would be tailored to local needs. (Futrell, 1989, p.12)

The National Governor’s Association jumped on the bandwagon that same year with the publication of Time for Results in 1986. The Governors clearly stated their intention of passing on responsibility and authority to local school districts, stating, “We’ll regulate less, if schools and school districts will produce better results” (p.3). The National Governor’s Association report developed a framework for school restructuring that focused on four main areas of reform (O’Neil, 1990):

- Curriculum and instruction modified to support higher-order thinking
- Authority and decision-making decentralized to the school site
- New staff roles for teachers (empowerment) and principals (vision and leadership)
- Accountability systems linking incentives to performance

The second wave of educational reform led to a realization that, in order to change public education, the very structure of public education needed to be torn down and rebuilt (Finn & Rebarber, 1992; Lunenberg, 1992):

After decades of attempts to reform schools, most of which constituted little more than tinkering with surface parts, many observers feel that schools as they are presently organized must be overhauled in ways that fundamentally change the institution of schooling itself. Acknowledging the magnitude of the task, school restructuring proponents nonetheless argue that nothing less than systemwide change will produce schools capable of serving the needs of students, educators, and the community at large. (O'Neil, 1990, p.5)

This attempt to restructure led to the creation in subsequent years of numerous programs, initiatives, and centers based on overhauling the basic operating systems of individual schools or school districts. These included TheodoreSizer's Coalition of Essential Schools (1985), John Goodlad's National Network for Educational Renewal (1988), Philip Schlechty's Center for Leadership in School Reform (1990), and Mike Cohen's National Alliance on Restructuring Education (1991). The NEA implemented three of its own projects on restructuring in 1985 and 1986 - Mastery in Learning Project, Operation Rescue, and TABS (Team Approach to Better Schools). These restructuring efforts were based on many similar features:

- Site-based management
- Accountability for student learning
- Establishment of school goals and common visions
- Establishment of leadership for change
- Teacher empowerment
- Teacher training
- Community collaboration
- Equity in education for all students
- Curricular, instructional, and assessment reform

Many of these programs involved small numbers of schools or school districts engaged in small-scale restructuring projects. While the projects touted success for the schools in which they were located, the overall effect on long-range educational policy and instruction was questioned. In an interview with Michael Cohen, he stated, “You asked about restructuring schools, but we want to restructure the *education system*....The trick for states and for districts is to make a set of strategic moves and comprehensive policy changes that affect *all* schools” (Brandt, 1991, p.58).

State Reform Initiatives

In response to this call for more state and local initiatives to effect reform, the period between 1983 and 1990 produced a huge wave of state regulations and initiatives focused on bringing about effective reforms of this “education system”, with more than 1,000 statutes enacted dealing with some aspect of school reform (Ornstein, 1991). Ornstein describes these “waves” as falling into three “reform-type packages: academic standards, professional policy, and curriculum development” (p.47). By 1987, all 50 states had undertaken some form of academic and curriculum reform. Almost all states had upgraded their professional development programs, increased high school graduation requirements, and implemented some type of statewide assessment program. By 1988, 48 states had introduced changes in teacher preparation programs, and 37 states required testing for initial certification of teachers. Twenty states had upgraded the educational and testing requirements of principals, and demanded stricter evaluation and accountability of principals (Ornstein, 1991, p.47).

Specific State and City Initiatives

It is useful to look more closely at some specific state and city initiatives that occurred during this time-frame to get a better sense of specific reform activities and their ability to bring about substantial change in their educational systems. Three key locations involved in reform efforts during this period of time were the city of Chicago, and the states of Kentucky and Massachusetts.

In the Chicago public schools, declared the “worst in the nation” by U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett in 1987 (Walberg & Niemiec, 1994), the Chicago Reform Act was passed in 1988 with the intent of raising achievement, attendance, and graduation rates to national norms within five years. The Reform Act had three major components: a set of goals covering such areas as academic proficiency, attendance, curriculum, and transition to further education and employment; a requirement to reallocate the resources of the system to decrease administrative costs and funnel more money directly to the schools; and the transference of major decision-making authority from the central office to “local school councils” composed of the principal, teachers, parents, and community representatives (Hess, 1995; Walberg & Niemiec, 1994). These councils were given considerable power - to hire and fire principals and teachers, set school policy, oversee the school budget, and develop school improvement plans.

An assessment of the impact of Chicago school reform questions the effectiveness of the act on bringing about substantial changes. Follow-up studies (Hess, 1995; Walberg & Niemiec, 1994) show no improvement, and in some cases even declines, in student achievement, attendance, and graduation rates. When polled, 57% of Chicago teachers

reported that restructuring had had no effect on their classrooms (Boo, 1993). The major problem with Chicago reform appeared to be the ineffectiveness of the local school councils, maintenance of the bureaucratic school administration, and continuing financial difficulties (Boo, 1993; Hess, 1995). By 1992, a third of the council members had quit in frustration, while many empty council seats were left unfilled. Hess, however, cautions that it was still too soon to draw definitive conclusions about the success or failure of Chicago school reform efforts, stating that, “though progress was fragile and far from complete, Chicago school reform was generally moving in the right direction” (p.105). While it is difficult to move an entire school system forward, individual schools showed promising movements towards achieving effective school restructuring.

Kentucky school reform was precipitated by the 1989 Kentucky Supreme Court decision that declared the state’s entire educational system unconstitutional. The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), passed in 1990, called for the establishment of educational goals, curriculum frameworks, professional development, and improved educational assessments. The major vehicle for implementation of these reforms was also the creation of local school councils which had authority to set policy in eight areas: curriculum, staff time, student assignments, scheduling, school space, instructional issues, discipline, and extracurricular activities.

However, the effectiveness of these school councils has varied considerably (David, 1994). The number of parents running for the council and voting in elections has been very small. The lack of training in group processes, implementation of change, establishing common goals and visions, as well as technical training on legal issues and

management, has hindered many councils from effecting positive changes in the classroom. In many cases, decisions made by the councils were never implemented by a principal unwilling to bring about change.

For the most part, teachers, students, and parents do not yet grasp what these changes mean - and when they do, they are not likely to have the skills and knowledge to implement them....The idea that the ultimate purpose of councils is to advance student learning has not been stressed enough. (David, 1994, p.711)

Steffy (1993), citing reform efforts in Kentucky, warns that “educational reform is not a ‘quick fix’ and will take a lasting presence, perhaps a decade or more” (p. 267).

Steffy claims that Kentucky school reform, in contrast to Chicago, is more comprehensive and focused legislatively, since every statute that applied to education in the state was reviewed and rewritten. It will take many more years of effort and study to determine the success or failure of Kentucky’s state-wide reform efforts.

In Massachusetts, The Education Reform Act of 1993 was a result of a collaborative effort between the business community, legislators, and educators. The purpose of the act was to ensure high quality education for every student in Massachusetts. The four major components of the Reform Act included:

...new programs and standards that will ensure high achievement for all students, a fair and equitable system of school finance, a governance structure that encourages innovation and accountability at all levels, and standards and processes that will enhance the quality, professionalism, and accountability of all educational personnel. (Massachusetts Department of Education, 1993, overview)

Key provisions of the act included:

- Establishment of academic standards in seven core subjects (“frameworks”).
- Statewide assessment of students based on academic competencies set forth in the frameworks.

- Annual evaluation of individual schools and school districts, with legal repercussions for chronically underperforming schools and districts.
- Reduced responsibilities of school committees in favor of site-based management of individual schools and districts, including greater power for superintendents and principals.
- Reformulated school finance to improve equity between school districts by creating minimum “foundation budgets” and increased state funding for poorer districts.
- Creation of mandatory school councils for each school composed of the principal, parents, teachers, and community representatives.
- Mandatory adoption of school goals and annual school improvement plans written by school councils.
- Replacement of teacher tenure with “professional teacher status”.
- Abolishment of tenure for superintendents and principals, and prohibition of collective bargaining for principals.
- Implementation of new teacher certification requirements and evaluation procedures.
- Initiation of school choice and charter school procedures for local school districts.

A report published by the Department of Education in February, 1998, states that the Commonwealth will have provided more than \$2 billion in new state Education Reform dollars for the public schools by the year 2000. Other accomplishments reported by the Department were school councils in every school, more authority for principals, measurable statewide standards for student learning, and the introduction of a “high-stakes” test based on the new curriculum standards. The report states, “While there is

still much to be done to achieve our goals, substantial progress has been made in schools throughout the Commonwealth” (Massachusetts Department of Education, 1998, p.2).

Although the Department of Education reported that the Education Reform Act was responsible for numerous positive changes in the schools, no record could be found of studies actually conducted in the schools by independent agencies to verify these successes. As mentioned above, this type of field-based research is noted in other states and cities undergoing restructuring efforts.

More National Initiatives

Even as the states were jumping on the bandwagon of educational reform during the late 1980's, the national government was again looking at its role in implementing significant educational change. This shift back to a national focus on education culminated in a report issued in 1989 by President Bush and the 50 state governors, assembled for an education summit in Charlottesville, Virginia. The report declared support for six national education goals, based on a vision for schools in the year 2000:

- All children will start school ready to learn.
- High school graduation rate will increase to at least 90%.
- Students will demonstrate competency in the basic core subjects needed “in our modern economy.”
- U.S. students will be first in the world in science and math.
- Every adult American will be literate and able to compete in a global economy.
- Every school will be free of drugs and violence. (Nystrand, 1992, p.20)

In 1991, the Bush administration offered its vision of how to meet these national goals by issuing *America 2000: An Education Strategy* (U.S. Department of Education), listing four strategies for meeting the six goals stated above. These strategies included improving every school and making them more accountable, inventing new schools to

meet the demands of future students, helping those students out of school keep learning, and involving families and communities in schools to help them succeed. Specific recommendations to achieve these goals included national standards in the five core academic areas, voluntary achievement tests, dissemination of national and state report cards, development of school choice policies, emphasis on school site reform, and professional development and alternative certification for teachers and administrators.

America 2000 was met with skepticism and alarm by many educators (Clinchy, 1991; Nystrand, 1992). Debate centered on the return to a top-down, national agenda for educational reforms, and on the issue of school choice for non-public schools. A proposal for national testing and a national curriculum was seen as highly controversial, and in direct conflict with the notion of site-based management and “revolutionary reforms.”

America 2000 was never passed by Congress.

When President Clinton succeeded President Bush, he incorporated the goals and objectives of *America 2000* into his own education reform package. Calling it “the first major school reform legislation in more than a decade” (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 1994, p.2), President Clinton issued *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* in 1994. This act kept intact the original six goals of *America 2000*, and added two more goals dealing with teacher professional development and parental involvement in education. By eliminating some of the more controversial elements of *America 2000*, such as school choice for non-public schools, *Goals 2000* won approval from Congress and became a law in 1994.

Goals 2000 encourages a bottom-up approach to reform, claiming its mission is to help states, school districts, and individual schools “engage in the difficult work of

school reform” (Stevenson, 1995, p.458). However, key components of the act appeared to enhance the role of the Federal Government by creating a National Education Goals Panel to build support and report progress toward meeting the goals; a National Education Standards and Improvement Council to set voluntary national standards and assessment systems; and a National Skills Standards Board to certify skills standards for entry-level workers in specific occupational fields.

Attached to *Goals 2000* was \$92 million for fiscal year 1994. Funds were given to states through incentive grants. States in turn funded local district improvement plans that were submitted and approved. However, this amount of money, spread throughout the country, only provided funding for a small number of grants, and to a limited number of districts in the state. For example, in Massachusetts, the \$1.3 million allocated for the “*Goals 2000* Competitive Grants” was awarded to only a few districts in only three areas: district improvement plans, preservice teacher education, and professional development (Mass. Dept. of Ed. Memorandum, 9/1/94).

The effectiveness of *Goals 2000* in changing education also remains to be seen. President Clinton continues to have difficulty pushing through legislation to establish national assessment tests and educational standards. Funding for the programs is challenged annually by Congress, although the general trend is for an increase in allocations each year - \$92 million in 1994, \$362 million in 1995, \$340 million in 1996, \$476 million in 1997, and \$466 million in 1998.

The National Education Goals Panel, created to assess progress in *Goals 2000*, issued its 1996 Goals Report in 1997. It listed six areas where significant change has

occurred (e.g., improved mathematics achievement in grades 4,8, and 12; more students receiving degrees in math and science, including female and minority students; decrease in incidents of threat and injury to students). Seven areas of national performance had declined (e.g., reading scores in grade 12 declined; percentage of secondary teachers who hold a degree in their main teaching assignments declined; student drug use and attempted sales at school increased; teachers reporting disruptions in their classrooms interfering with teaching increased). Seven areas showed no significant changes since Goals 2000 was established (e.g., high school completion rate; improved reading achievement in grades 4 and 8; reduction in the gap between preschool participation rates between high- and low-income families) (National Education Goals Panel, 1997).

Top-down vs. Bottom-up Reforms

An on-going question that stands out from this study of the history of educational reform is whether “top-down” or “bottom-up” reforms are the most effective in bringing about substantial change. The previous discussion illustrates the various “waves of reform” that have dominated the reform movement in the last 15 years, from the top-down initiatives resulting from *A Nation at Risk* (1983), to the bottom-up reforms suggested in the mid-1980’s by documents such as *A Nation Prepared* (1986) and *Time for Results* (1986), back to the top-down standards and goals proposed by *America 2000* (1989) and *Goals 2000* (1994). An analysis of the pros and cons of each side of the argument provides insights into the complexity of the educational reform movement and the ability of either to change the education system.

The early “top-down” reforms, as described by Futrell (1989), included federal and state regulations that stipulated “what should be taught, how it should be taught, and by whom it should be taught” (p.11). The purpose of these top-down statutes was to control and regulate teachers and local schools, with a goal of compliance and conformity to mandated regulations. Top-down reformers assumed that, unless schools were regulated and held accountable to a high standard, they would not adequately educate their students. The deterioration of the educational system as described in *A Nation at Risk* (1983) was attributed to this lack of accountability to high standards (Lunenberg, 1992).

Even today, proponents of national performance standards such as *Goals 2000* (1994) claim that the United States must have top-down, voluntary academic standards for all students if we are to maintain our ability to compete with other developed nations who have these standards (Lunenberg, 1992; Paris, 1997). “Developing voluntary national standards that are of high quality is critical to school reform because it can begin a national dialogue about what students should know and be able to do in academic subjects” (Stevenson, 1995, p. 460).

There are many arguments against top-down reforms and standards as a viable way for changing the educational system. Governments can’t mandate implementation; too often, their efforts focus on monitoring compliance to rules and regulations at the expense of effective change (Fullan, 1991). The setting of national or state standards, curriculum, and assessments for all students is also problematic. How do you set fair and equitable standards for students in different parts of the country, from different backgrounds, and from urban vs. suburban settings? The setting of minimal standards

that might accomplish this task waters down the accountability for high-quality learning that purports to be the focus of national standards (Stevenson, 1995). Paris (1997) claims that there is no evidence that the creation of voluntary national standards will motivate schools to improve their performance. It has also proven difficult to set curriculum standards that are agreeable to all parties. An example of this dilemma is the recent controversy over the adoption of the social studies curriculum frameworks in Massachusetts, with various committee members taking sides over process vs. content, depth vs. breadth, and western vs. global orientation. Another difficulty with top-down reforms is how to adequately measure student achievement and the attainment of standardized academic goals (Paris, 1997).

Most recent reformers advocate an approach that stresses “bottom-up” reforms - reforms that originate at the school level and are tailored to the needs and culture of each individual site. “Intuitively, it makes sense that teachers, school administrators, and parents - those closest to children - are best positioned to craft educational strategies that meet the needs of their particular students” (Shields & Knapp, 1997, p.288). Shields and Knapp give a broad definition of school-based, bottom-up reform as “taking steps to energize, empower, and reorganize the work of teachers and school administrators, both individually and collectively, in the context of particular school sites” (p.289). Bottom-up reforms include site-based management and shared decision-making; local fiscal, curricular, and instructional management and accountability; and community-based, cooperative efforts at reform.

A driving force in bottom-up reform is the notion that there is no one path to excellence and equity in education, thus legitimizing the school-by-school basis for reform efforts.

There is no excuse for believing that educational excellence for all students necessitates a uniform structure for all schools. Solid evidence supports a variety of approaches to teaching, learning, and the structure of schooling - as long as these approaches are forged at the local level. Solid evidence demonstrates that, to educate young people to their full potential, we must legitimate divergent paths to that goal. (Futrell, 1989, p.14)

Bottom-up reforms are seen as having greater force to bring about needed changes because of the passion and leadership that drive and sustain changes at each school level (Schlechty, 1990). Teachers are empowered to make changes in their classroom that they feel will improve learning; principals are empowered to develop and implement a shared vision of effective schools and schooling; parents are empowered to help create the schools that they feel will best meet the needs of their children.

Although school-based reforms seem to be the major focus of current changes in the educational system, there are some detractors who question whether bottom-up reforms can be totally successfully. Paris (1997) states that "many of the touted success stories of local reform have been measured against local expectations and judgments, rather than broad-based criteria" (p.53). He cautions that failure to hold schools accountable to some external, objective standard "risks allowing our education system to slip back to the loose, student-centered norms that led to the current crisis" (p.54).

Another question that arises about the feasibility of school-based reforms lies in the nature of site-based decision-making, which is at the heart of bottom-up reform

efforts. Pogrow (1996) cautions that “the site-based bandwagon is at least five years old, but there still is no agreement on what it is and no evidence that it is either workable or effective” (p.660). David (1994), in her study of decentralization as it relates to Kentucky school reform, found many problems with the reformulation of power to local school councils. In her ongoing study, she describes problems finding representative parent and teacher participants, lack of training for council members on site-based management techniques, more focus on micromanaging day-to-day operations of the school rather than deeper understanding of the quality of teaching and learning, dependence on the skill and authority orientation of the principal, and personal agendas of some council members that hinder focusing on real reform efforts.

While there are obvious tensions and incompatibilities between top-down and bottom-up approaches to school reform, many educators and researchers see the need for both in order for substantial changes in education to take place. This “middle-of-the-road” approach “integrates the goals and policies of the state with local conditions and practices. The approach establishes a process for solving problems without proposing solutions; the solutions that evolve are locally based” (Ornstein, 1991, p.48-49). This approach calls for states and the federal government to commit to reform initiatives such as high expectations and accountability for learning, equity for all students, and a commitment to long-range, comprehensive reform efforts, while leaving it up to the individual schools and districts to develop appropriate ways of achieving these reforms. The relationship between state and federal governments and the local schools should be seen as mutually beneficial, rather than adversarial. Fullan (1991), quotes a study of the

dynamics of this relationship that found little resistance from schools to state initiatives that fostered academic excellence, and the local schools “actively using state policies to promote local priorities” (p.267).

One of our most interesting and important discoveries is that many local districts are going far beyond compliance; they are responding very actively to state reforms. In over half of our local districts, administrators saw in the state reforms opportunities to accomplish their own objectives, particularly as the state reforms provided significant funding increases. Local districts are actively orchestrating various state policies around local priorities, strategically interacting with the state to achieve goals. (Fuhrman, Clune & Elmore, 1988 as quoted in Fullan, 1991, p.267)

In order for federal, state, and local initiatives for school reform to be effective, it is imperative for all involved to agree on the purpose of education and reform efforts. Paris (1997) claims that the difficulty in the drive for national standards and assessment is that it's based on economic and political dominance of the world market, while parents and educators are pushing for good education for their students.

What drives current grassroots efforts to reform education is not the impulse to fight an economic war. In fact, issues of international economic competitiveness are hardly uppermost in educators' minds. What's more important to them is the development of certain basic academic and social skills. (Paris, p. 54)

The greatest hope for effective reforms in the educational system lies with a convergence of philosophies and mutually agreeable practices that bring federal and state governments and local schools together to bring about needed changes. This relationship would allow governments to hold schools accountable to high standards, while providing school and districts with resources and expertise to implement locally-based reform efforts.

Implementation of Reforms

Given this history of the reform movement in education since 1983, it appears that there is a general consensus about what needs to be done to reform education in the United States. There are consistent recommendations made by each of the various historical references that are repeated over and over again:

- Create higher standards of learning for all students
- Improve assessment and evaluation of student learning
- Increase the amount of time students spend on learning
- Create higher graduation standards for students
- Create higher standards for teacher certification and evaluation
- Restructure teacher college education
- Restructure schools to provide a professional environment for staff
- Redefine the “power structure” of schools to bring about more site-based management
- Create on-going opportunities for staff professional development
- Create higher standards and training for school administrators to promote effective leadership
- Restructure the educational system to allow for maximum community involvement and collaboration
- Encourage the establishment of common school goals and educational visions
- Create a system of accountability for individual schools and districts
- Create equitable systems for financing all school districts

The challenge of the reform movement may be to hold on to reform efforts long enough for them to have an impact before declaring them a failure and moving on to the next round of reforms (Cuban, 1990; Finn & Rebarber, 1992; Pogrow, 1996; Tyack &

Cuban, 1995). Paris (1997) claims that, “When all is said and done, more has been said than done in reforming our public school system” (p.46). Paris lists a number of reasons for this slow pace of reform:

- The educational system is “large, cumbersome, and diffuse, complicating even the most well-focused reform efforts” (p.46-47).
- Many interests, including teachers’ unions, are skeptical and sometimes opposed to reforms.
- Many parents and educators feel their own schools are doing well, and don’t feel a sense of urgency to reform or change.
- There are no set standards for accurately measuring and comparing educational achievement and progress.
- While there are many success stories for individual schools and districts, a variety of approaches have been used; these approaches have yet to “be translated into broader reforms that can reach across the nation” (p.47).
- Many of the reform efforts are in direct conflict with each other - e.g., national standards and assessments vs. local school control and autonomy.

Rallis & Zajano (1997) report that the educational community often gives up on reforms without waiting to see the long-term outcomes, stating, “The demise of reform initiatives is often due not to its ineffectiveness, but rather to its inability to deliver immediate results, however inappropriate or impossible that expectation might be” (p.707).

Politics also plays a role in these repeated cycles and failures of school reform, as reported by Finn and Rebarber (1992). Politicians may assume that, once their law is passed, they have fulfilled their responsibility to school reform, without waiting to see if

the new law will be “correctly interpreted and speedily implemented” (p.189). Those who are opposed to the new change “will persist in their efforts to undo it, whether by rushing into court for an injunction, biding their time for the next session of the legislature, dragging their heels or simply ignoring the new mandates” (p.189).

Sarason (1990) claims that reforms continually fail because reformers don't understand or take into account the complicated structures of school organizations, stating, “the failure of educational reform derives from a most superficial conception of how complicated settings are organized: their structure, their dynamics, their power relationships, and the underlying values and axioms” (p.4-5). Sarason maintains that reformers may continually list their goals for reform, but until you change the power relationships that exist in the schools to implement those goals, no long-term changes will take place.

Implementing Educational Change

The issue of implementing educational change and the seeming “intractability” of schools and schooling to change the way they typically do business must be understood in the context of the history of school reform. Much has been written on this topic (Conley, 1993b; Cuban, 1990; Fullan, 1991; Hargreaves, 1997; Sarason, 1990; Schlechty, 1990). Cuban argues that policymakers “fail to diagnose problems and promote correct solutions” (p.6). Pogrow (1996) claims that the failure of educational reforms lies in the reformers and the types of reforms they advocate that are “largely out of touch with reality” (p.658).

Fullan (1991) contends that “one of the most fundamental problems in education today is that people do not have a clear, coherent sense of *meaning* about what educational change is for, what it is, and how it proceeds” (p.4). He also cautions that change for the sake of change does not necessarily improve schools; sometimes resisting poorly thought-out change is a more positive move.

Many of these authors claim that reformers must understand the nature and process of educational change if schools are to be successfully restructured. Fullan (1991) states, “Neglect of the phenomenology of change - that is, how people actually experience change as distinct from how it might have been intended - is at the heart of the spectacular lack of success of most social reforms” (p. 4). He claims, “Systems do not change by themselves. People change systems through their actions” (p.352). He calls on both individuals and institutions to embrace change in order to bring about school reform and renewal. Conley (1996) states that educational change can be facilitated if the school community can agree on three things: the need and rationale for change; the general direction, or vision that will “guide their journey”; and the overall process to be followed.

In 1990, the Office of Research of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), part of the U.S. Department of Education, began a long-range study to evaluate the many education reform efforts that were taking place in the country. The Office for Research broke down this study into 12 specific areas of reform:

1. systemic reform
2. school-based management
3. uses of time

4. assessment of student performance
5. curriculum reform
6. professionalism of educators
7. school-to-work transition
8. early childhood education
9. parent and community involvement in education
10. technology
11. students at risk
12. student diversity

The purpose of the study was to generate important information that would be useful in future efforts to improve American education. The studies were designed to “find effective, replicable models and practices that others can emulate and adapt as they seek to reform American education at the pre-school, elementary, and secondary levels” (Anson & Fox, 1995, p.16-17). Each of the studies detailed practices and theories that were working in individual sites around the country, as well as reflecting on why some practices didn’t work. Seymour Sarason (1995) summarized the over-all themes that he saw emerging from the 12 separate studies:

- “Changing one aspect of the education system is extraordinarily difficult, both conceptually and practically. Deal with one aspect only, and you quickly confront local and systemwide barriers to change” (p.5).
- “The ‘system’ - by virtue of history, tradition, and overlearned attitudes - is allergic to change” (p.5).
- While we have already learned much, “what is demonstrated in a single classroom or school never spreads” (p.5). Even at the original site, it is hard to maintain changes and momentum when key participants leave.

- “The professional preparation of educators is manifestly inadequate in inculcating the spirit, substance, and complexity of the reform effort” (p.5).
- “The *initial* object of change is not students, the classroom, or the system; it is the attitudes and conceptions of educators themselves” (p.5).

The Emergence of Restructuring

Definition of Restructuring

As educators and legislators strove to bring about changes in the educational system, a new term surfaced in the late 1980's - restructuring. The theory behind the term was that it was no longer effective to try to improve the educational system without changing its basic structure (Cohen, 1988; Conley, 1993b; Lewis, 1989; Murphy, 1992; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

We can no longer assume that traditional methods and approaches will be adequate for the future....Schools must fundamentally change the way they do business if we are to be successful in educating today's children for tomorrow's world. Tinkering with the system will no longer do. (National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE], 1990, p.3)

As described by Schlechty (1990), “It is not enough to try to fix schools; they must be reconstituted in fundamental and radical ways. In a word, the schools, like America's businesses, must be *restructured*” (p. xvi).

Some educators trace the origin of the term, “restructuring,” to John Goodlad in 1983. In his study of effective schools entitled *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future*, his concluding remarks include the statement:

The agenda for restructuring the schools we have is a demanding one. At its heart is the need for data of a contextual sort to guide the determination of priorities by planning groups of responsible parties at the school site level. (p. 360)

The 1986 Carnegie Forum report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, is also an early source of the term “restructuring.” Stated as one of its eight recommendations for “sweeping changes in education policy”, the report calls on the nation to “restructure schools to provide a professional environment for teaching, freeing them to decide how best to meet state and local goals for children while holding them accountable for student progress” (p.3).

The term “restructuring” quickly took hold as the latest buzzword of educational jargon. Jane David wrote in 1991, “Five years ago the word *restructuring* was unheard of in education circles; today it is heard everywhere. That few educators share a definition of restructuring - or even have one - has hardly slowed its spread” (p.11). Fred Newmann (1995), from the newly-formed Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, states:

“Restructuring” has entered the dialogue of practitioners, policymakers and researchers with a burst of power, but also ambiguity....Restructuring joins a lexicon of other memorable slogans in the history of educational reform (e.g., back to basics, community control, effective schools, choice, cultural literacy). (p.6)

Conley (1993b) distinguishes between “the three R’s” of change in education - renewal, reform, and restructuring. Renewal is described as “activities that help the organization to do better and/or more efficiently than which it is already doing” (p.7). While renewal gives credit to past experience, it “does not cause schools to examine any of their basic assumptions or practices” (p.7).

Reform describes changes that “alter existing procedures, rules, and requirements to enable the organization to adapt the way it functions to new circumstances or

requirements” (p.8). These changes center on the policies and procedures that determine the “basic rules of the game.” Another distinction is that the push for reform almost always comes from “some external force, such as a board of education, a state department of education, or even educational reformers” (p.8).

Conley defines restructuring as “those activities that change fundamental assumptions, practices, and relationships, both within the organization and between the organization and the outside world, in ways that lead to improved student learning” (p.8-9). Conley emphasizes that “student learning” is a key element of his definition, since it is important to remain focused on student learning as the key reason for any changes in the educational system.

Other distinctions are made between restructuring and previous “traditional” reform efforts in education. David (1991) claims that past reform movements have tried to change one piece of the system at a time, while restructuring tackles all the pieces.

Restructuring requires all parts of the education system to change, from students and teachers up through the myriad bureaucratic layers to the nation’s capital. Two key features distinguish restructuring from previous reform efforts: it is driven by a focus on student performance, based on the premise that all students can and must learn at higher levels; and it is a long-term commitment to fundamental, systemic change. These features mark restructuring as a significant departure from previous improvement efforts - and embody a challenge greater than any the system has faced before. (David, 1991, p.11)

Distinctions are also made between “restructuring” and “effective schools.” The effective schools movement began in the early 1980’s, based on studies that identified particularly effective practices in successful schools. An effective school is defined as one in which essentially all the students acquire the basic skills and other desired

behaviors within the school (Back & Monroe, 1985). Many of these practices are similar to those identified in restructuring - high expectations for student learning, organizational structures that promote maximum achievement, and instructional practices that strive for consistency in academic achievement. The distinction between effective schools and restructuring centers on the implementation of these effective practices. While the effective schools movement provides a list of practices that will improve student achievement, restructuring provides a way to implement those practices in a school setting.

The effective schools approach and restructuring are two overlapping and sometimes compatible strategies of how to improve schools. They are both school based, but effective schools asks teachers to choose strategies from a menu of proven approaches. Restructuring presents a school with a blank slate in hopes that more radical solutions will emerge and have greater ownership. (Boysen, 1992, p.91)

Developing and agreeing on a definition of the new term “restructuring” is in and of itself a major task for educational reformers. Philip Schlechty (1990) defines restructuring as “altering systems of rules, roles, and relationships so that schools can serve existing purposes more effectively or serve new purposes altogether” (p.xvi).

Elmore (1990) defines three main dimensions that are associated with restructuring:

- Changes in the way teaching and learning occur, or the core technology of schooling
- Changes in the occupational situation of educators, including conditions of entry and licensure of teachers and administrators, and school structure, conditions of work, and decision-making processes within schools
- Changes in the distribution of power between schools and their clients, or in the governance structure within which schools operate (Elmore, p.11)

In 1989, Anne Lewis (quoted in Conley, 1993a, p.16) consolidated a number of definitions of restructuring in a summary of its basic elements:

- It is student- and teacher-centered;
- It changes the way students learn and teachers teach, requiring both to assume greater initiative;
- It applies to all students and all schools, not just the disadvantaged;
- It affects curriculum as well as organization;
- It needs a central vision within a school to which all involved subscribe;
- It requires becoming “unstuck” from many current reforms and from a built-up centralized bureaucracy;
- It is advocated by diverse interests in society;
- It amounts to those actions that allow and encourage higher expectations of both teachers and students.

A national study of restructuring released in 1991 found that certain prerequisites need to be in place in schools in order for restructuring efforts to be initiated.

“Restructuring schools do not spring into existence spontaneously. Their emergence is a product of many diverse and complex forces and conditions” (Mojkowski & Bamberger, 1991, p.21). These prerequisites include (p.21-22):

- Readiness to change (dissatisfaction with existing conditions and a frustration with the existing organization)
- Incentives (positive and negative)
- Positive working conditions (security, atmosphere of trust and mutual respect)
- Resources (time and money)
- Skilled leadership (to initiate and sustain change efforts)

As the term “restructuring” took hold in the educational community, new debate focused on what actually constituted a “restructured school.” Do all restructured schools have to have the same elements? Can a school have many required elements and still not be restructured? Table 1 (page 43) summarizes the main characteristics of restructuring as seen by various educators. This table compares the common characteristics of restructured schools as stated by six prominent authors in the field. It is interesting to note that many of the characteristics that are stated by most of the authors are goals of good education for any school, and are not necessarily distinguishing characteristics of restructured schools. These include: curriculum review and development, equity for student learning, focus on higher-order thinking skills, high expectations for students and teachers, home-school partnerships, staff development, student-centered learning, and varied grouping of students. Four of the most commonly stated characteristics that are associated primarily with restructuring are: change in beliefs, changes in school governance, shared decision-making, and teacher empowerment.

It is interesting to note the frequency with which the various characteristics occur in the table, as it reflects some of the tendencies and problems sometimes associated with restructuring. The characteristics that are cited most frequently reflect the most common rhetoric on restructuring - changes in practice, beliefs, and roles of educators. Of more interest are the characteristics at the bottom of the chart that deal with accountability and planning. A frequent criticism of education and reform is that it fails to carefully plan where it’s going, as in establishing a shared vision. Educators are also often cited for doing a poor job of program evaluation based on research and analysis of data generated at

the school site. Both of these issues are reflected in the lack of studies that touch on their importance.

Table 1
Characteristics of Restructured Schools

Characteristic	No.	Conley (1996)	Elmore (1990)	Lewis (1989)	Lieberman & Miller (1990)	Moore (1993)	New- mann (1993)
Curriculum review and development	6	X	X	X	X	X	X
High expectations for students & teachers	6	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student-centered learning	6	X	X	X	X	X	X
Equity for student learning	5	X		X	X	X	X
Focus on higher-order thinking skills	5	X	X		X	X	X
Home-school partnerships	5	X	X		X	X	X
Shared decision-making	5	X	X		X	X	X
Teacher empowerment	5	X	X		X	X	X
Change in beliefs	4			X	X	X	X
Changes in school governance	4	X	X		X		X
Staff development	4	X	X		X		X
Varied grouping of students	4	X	X		X		X
Community involvement	3	X			X		X
Time organized to improve learning	3	X	X				X
Accountability for student learning	2	X					X
Collective fiscal responsibility	2					X	X
Program decisions based on data analysis	2		X				X
Shared vision	2			X	X		
Visionary leadership	2				X	X	

Another characteristic mentioned less frequently in the chart was “time organized to improve learning.” The issue of time is an important one in the discussion of restructuring and reforms in education. While studies mention the need to lengthen the school day and/or school year in order to have adequate time to implement the many curricular changes supported by educational reform, there is less attention paid to the need for time for educators to collaborate and reflect on the process of reform. Even

Fullan (1991), in his discourse on educational change, doesn't mention this lack of time for teachers and administrators to discuss, plan, implement, and evaluate their reform efforts. This lack of time is especially notable on the elementary level, and may be an interesting topic for further research.

The Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, based at the University of Wisconsin, conducted a School Restructuring Study in the early 1990's to identify public schools that were considered to be comprehensively restructured. A list of 38 restructuring characteristics were listed by the Center as possible criteria for the study. Newmann (1995) clarified that a school did not have to have all 38 elements in order to be considered "restructured." He states:

The most restructured schools are those that represent the most extensive implementation of the largest number of criteria distributed across most or all arenas. The least restructured schools are those that represent the least extensive implementation of the smallest number of criteria distributed across only one or a few arenas....It would be foolish for a school to adopt a restructuring plan that attempted to implement the 38 criteria as if adding separate ingredients to a recipe. (p.7)

Newmann (1995) adds that the "school must first build a foundation by clarifying the educational ends it seeks, assessing its unique needs, and analyzing how it must change to serve those needs" (p.7). He lists six outcomes that should be promoted through restructuring efforts:

1. Authentic student achievement (higher-order thinking, in-depth study, substantive dialogue)
2. Equity of student educational opportunities (race, gender, social class, cultural background)
3. Empowerment of parents, teachers, principals, and students
4. Communities of learning (shared goals, common purpose, collaborative work)

5. Reflective dialogue (open, non-threatening questioning and testing of basic assumptions)
6. Accountability for student outcomes (Newmann, p.7)

Approaches to Restructuring

Just as there was no one decisive definition for the term “restructuring”, educators found that there was no one right way to go about actually restructuring a school or schools (Conley, 1993b & 1996; Lewis, 1989; Schlechty, 1990). Lieberman and Miller (1990) claim that “there are many different scenarios for school restructuring, none of them ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ ” (p.753). The general consensus is that restructuring is most successful when it is approached on a school by school basis. Goodlad (1984) states:

Significant educational improvement of schooling, not mere tinkering, requires that we focus on entire schools, not just teachers or principals or curricula or organization or school-community relations but all of these and more....It is advisable to focus on one place where all of the elements come together. This is the individual school....If we are to improve schooling, we must improve individual schools. (p.xvi)

Lieberman and Miller (1990) claim that these individual approaches to restructuring can be separated into two discrete categories: procedures (providing the organizational means for restructuring such as school-level committees or collaborative decision-making) and principles (articulation of guiding principles or values). To illustrate the former, they give as an example the Maine State Restructuring Program, enacted in October, 1987, where schools were invited to submit proposals that articulated individual restructuring initiatives at each school site. Restructuring by articulating principles emphasizes key guiding values that become the foundation for school reform. The example given by Lieberman and Miller is the

Coalition of Essential Schools, headed by TheodoreSizer, which stresses nine core principles to which all member schools must subscribe. While each school must embrace these guiding principles, the implementation of reforms based on these values is designed by each individual school site.

Conley (1993b &1996) offers a “guidebook” to school communities that provides a “conceptual framework within which restructuring activities and processes can be considered.” In his book, *Are You Ready to Restructure?* (1996), he summarizes key information needed by restructuring committees to plan and implement significant changes at the school level, including discussion questions at the end of each chapter that raise “key issues designed to focus the group’s attention and deliberations” (p.2).

Many authors caution that, even though vital restructuring efforts must take place at the school-site level, all levels of the educational system must change in order for restructuring to be successful (Cohen, 1988; Lewis, 1989; Murphy, 1992; Ornstein, 1991). David (1991) states that districts and states must also change if they are to support the restructuring efforts taking place at the school level by providing an “invitation” for schools to change, by giving schools the authority and flexibility to change, and by giving them access to knowledge and skills that are vital to the restructuring effort. Timar (1989) calls for changes in district and state policies, teacher training institutions, and professional organizations in order for restructuring on the school level to be successful. Conley’s handbook on restructuring (1996) cites the changing roles of students, educators, parents, community, school boards, central offices, and teacher associations in order to achieve successful restructuring.

Shields and Knapp (1997) summarize the impact that districts and states have on school-level reform based on a national study of school-based reform sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. They identified nine actions by districts and/or states that might influence a particular school's reform efforts in either positive or constraining ways:

- Catalyzing and initiating school-based reform
- Influencing the staffing patterns at a school
- Balancing authority relations between schools, districts, and the state that effect empowerment of school personnel
- Setting goals and boundaries for reform activity
- Setting and waiving requirements in areas such as instructional planning, curriculum design, assessment, and accountability
- Providing professional development opportunities and technical assistance
- Garnering resources by actively assisting schools to secure additional and more specialized resources
- Managing pressures from external constituencies
- Establishing accountability mechanisms

The federal role in restructuring is somewhat contradictory. *Goals 2000* claims that it will “encourage and challenge local communities to use ingenuity and creativity in creating new and improved methods of teaching and learning” (Riley, 1994). Clinchy (1991) points out that a mandated national curriculum and national standardized tests will force the schools to continue to rely on traditional teaching methods and school organizations in order to achieve these national standards.

Instead of promoting the radical restructuring of our system of public education that so many people believe to be necessary, the...national goals...may well end up freezing in place the very hierarchical, top-down, antidemocratic structure that has plagued our present system of public education since...the early decades of this century. (Clinchy, 1991, p.217).

The establishment of national curriculum standards and standardized testing is still being debated in Congress. The role of the federal government in restructuring remains controversial at this time. As stated earlier, the greatest impact on restructuring efforts is when federal and state governments and local schools work together on mutual goals, philosophies, and practices in order to initiate effective school reforms.

Successfully Restructured Schools

It is informative to look at schools that are considered to be successfully restructured in order to summarize effective characteristics, strategies, and practices. Two broad categories of schools emerge during this study: schools that have restructured following an established model, such as the previously mentioned Coalition of Essential Schools, and individual schools that have applied basic principles of restructuring to their own reform efforts.

Many established models of school restructuring have emerged in recent years, often associated with well-known names in the school reform movement. These models set forth guiding principles and action plans for schools to follow in their restructuring efforts, while still maintaining the individuality of each site. Schools often “sign up” to be part of these programs, and many organizations claim to have waiting lists. Six examples of these restructuring models are Ernest Boyer’s Basic Schools, TheodoreSizer’s Coalition of Essential Schools, James Comer’s Comer Model, Carl Glickman’s League of

Professional Schools, Stanford University's Accelerated Schools Program, and John Goodlad's Center for Educational Renewal.

Boyer's Basic Schools are built around the work of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The term "basic schools" refers to a focus on the beginning of schooling (the elementary school), the "basic" priority of language and a core of essential knowledge, and the identification of "basic" practices that really work to improve the education of every child. The shared vision of the Basic School is "excellence for all," with a central mission that states that every child has the right to a quality education, that high academic standards must be set, and that every child can and will succeed given their aptitudes and interests. Four priorities are listed as essential building blocks for the program: The School as Community, Curriculum Coherence, a Climate for Learning, and a Commitment to Character. Boyer claims that these essential principles are not new, but are already going on in schools across the country. The Basic Schools movement is an attempt to bring together the best practices in a coherent model that individual schools can use as the basis for their own reform efforts. Boyer also stresses the importance of smaller schools, where every child is known by name.

As described earlier, Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools is also based on nine core principles that form the basis of restructuring efforts. These include a focus on students learning to use their minds well, personalizing teaching and learning, setting high expectations, and establishing school goals that apply to all students. Sizer cautions that all reform efforts should maintain a focus on students and student learning (Lewis, 1989), and that changes should start slow and be given time to grow. Like Boyer, Sizer stresses

the importance of smaller schools where the key players know one another and work together (O'Neil, 1995). His model also incorporates site-based decision making as the basis for restructuring efforts. However, unlike many other reform movements, Essential Schools focuses on high schools as the focus for the program, rather than younger students.

James Comer also stresses the importance of collaboration and consensus-building in his Comer Model of school reform, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. The Comer Model claims the purpose of schooling is to “advance students’ social, emotional, and academic development toward the goal of becoming successful citizens” (Ramirez-Smith, 1995, p.14). Three key governance mechanisms are important for running the schools: a School Development Team, a Parent Program Team, and a Mental Health Team. A crucial aspect of all three teams is specific training of participants in skills such as group processing, conflict management, and team building. This training is practiced and solidified in the teams as they work on the three cornerstones of the Comer Model: a Comprehensive School Plan which sets academic, social, and public relation goals; Staff Development, which focuses on the needs identified in the School Plan; and Assessment and Modification, which generates and analyzes data from the school.

The League of Professional Schools, operating out of the University of Georgia, is based on the work of Carl Glickman and his colleagues at the Program for School Improvement. While the League is similar to other restructuring models in its three guiding principles (shared governance, action research, and an instructional focus), it provides another layer of interaction by bringing together representatives of each of the

member schools on a regular basis. These representatives form the governing body for the League, and make decisions about League activities and initiatives. This connection with other schools facilitates learning and provides support for member schools as they discuss and share successes and failures (Lunsford, 1995).

The Accelerated Schools Program emerged from the Center for Educational Research at Stanford University, focusing primarily on the at-risk student. Their basic premise is that at-risk students need to learn at a *faster* rate than other students to keep from falling farther and farther behind, using enrichment rather than remedial strategies (Levin, 1993). Based on three familiar guiding principles (unity of purpose, empowerment with responsibility, and building on the strengths of the entire school community), the Accelerated Schools Programs provides more of a structure for ongoing restructuring efforts (Keller, 1995). Schools start with the entire school community taking stock of its present situation, then forging a shared vision. The school identifies priority challenge areas to bridge the gap between the vision and the reality, then creates governance structures to address these priorities. While the Accelerated Schools model emphasizes that expertise for change can be found within each school community, regional trainers are provided to work with participating schools on a regular basis. The goal is for schools to become self-sustaining as they build the skills and structures necessary to maintain restructuring efforts.

These five models of restructuring programs have many similarities: guiding principles of effective educational programs, an emphasis on the individual school site as the focus of reform efforts, a focus on student learning as the basis for school reform, and

the need for collaborative governance in developing and maintaining effective changes in the schools.

John Goodlad's Center for Educational Renewal takes a different approach to restructuring efforts while embodying some of these key elements. Extending the premise from his book, *A Place Called School*, Goodlad focuses on improving the preparation of teachers and administrators as the basis for changing classroom practices. Goodlad maintains that better teachers are needed if schools are to improve; if teacher training programs are to improve, universities need access to schools that exhibit the best practices. The key to improvement is the creation of partnerships between universities and school districts.

The agendas of instructional, curricular, and organizational improvements needed in the schools and of the relevance of teacher education and research programs in schools of education appear to overlap and, thus, to satisfy the criterion of mutual self-interests characteristic of a potentially powerful partnership. (Lewis, 1989, p.54)

As an example of this partnership, Lewis describes the work done between the Puget Sound Educational Consortium and the University of Washington. Ann Lieberman, a university faculty member, headed the consortium as executive director. Working together, teachers, supervisors, and administrators launched a program involving five study groups: excellence and equity, a leadership academy, a study of teacher leadership, an educational development center, and analysis of education support. Each study group tackled its subject area through reflective dialogue, identifying critical issues in a process that exemplifies Goodlad's emphasis on change through "self-renewal" at the school site, rather than from mandates imposed from above (Lewis, 1989).

While many schools and school districts have used one of these specific models as the basis for their restructuring efforts, many more schools have applied the basic principles of restructuring to guide their own individual reform efforts. An example of this approach is the Maine State Restructuring Program, begun in 1987. The Maine Department of Education invited individual schools to submit proposals for restructuring efforts based on the following guidelines:

- Develop a shared vision
- Describe the process for planning the proposal
- Detail an implementation plan
- Document their capability to undertake the plan
- Have their proposal reviewed and approved by 75% of the faculty, the principal, the school committee, and the superintendent

Ten schools were awarded grants to implement their proposals. A study of the ten projects (Cox & deFrees, 1991) illustrates how individual schools, responding to their own needs and initiatives, can restructure successfully using a variety of methods and approaches. Yet an analysis of these ten separate projects yields common experiences and insights that reflect many of the basic premises of the restructuring movement: successful learning for all students, high expectations for academics, application of research on school practices, and the importance of connections with the larger community.

One of the largest studies of individually restructured schools was conducted by the Center on Organizing and Restructuring Schools. This School Restructuring Study (SRS) called for states, school districts, colleges, teachers, and principals to nominate

schools that they considered to be examples of successful restructuring. A preliminary analysis of the study (Berends, 1992) identified the most common characteristics of these restructured schools (out of 38 criteria initially proposed):

Student experiences:

- Varied instruction of students (whole group/small group/individual) in heterogeneous groupings
- Emphasis on production, rather than reproduction of knowledge
- Emphasis on depth of understanding, rather than breadth of knowledge

Professional life of teachers:

- Differentiated roles of teachers (mentoring, curriculum development, peer supervision)
- Staff design of staff development
- Control over curriculum and school policy
- Collaboration with parents and human service agencies

Governance:

- Site-based control over budget, staffing, and curriculum

Community Coordination:

- Coordination with other agencies offering social welfare services

Further analysis of the data showed that the schools often focused on one or two areas of restructuring, most commonly student experiences and professional life of teachers, to the exclusion of other areas of restructuring. Out of the 214 schools initially nominated for the study, only 28 schools met the necessary criteria to be identified as comprehensively restructured.

Newmann (1995) claims that the point of the study was to learn how “the tools of restructuring can be used to elevate learning for all students” (p.2). While stating there

is no simple recipe for success, he identifies four key “circles of support” that are necessary if restructuring is to be successful:

- Student Learning (schools restructured around a vision of high quality student learning)
- Authentic Pedagogy (teachers emphasizing higher-order thinking skills, in-depth understanding, and application to realistic problems)
- School Organizational Capacity (building the capacity of the school to work well as a unit that strives for continuous improvement)
- External Support (external agencies setting high standards for learning, providing sustained staff development, and using deregulation to increase school autonomy)

Other research studies have identified key components that correlate with successful school restructuring efforts. Zigarelli (1996), using a benchmark of student achievement to measure success, looked at six factors that contribute to the effectiveness of schools: good teachers, teacher participation and satisfaction, principal leadership and involvement, a culture of academic achievement, positive relations with the central school administration, and high parental involvement. He found that only three factors were significantly related to student achievement: a school culture that emphasizes achievement and time spent on direct instruction, teacher satisfaction and collegiality, and the authority of the principal to hire and fire teachers. Parental involvement was shown to have some influence, but teacher quality (advanced degrees), teacher empowerment, relationship of the school to the central office, and most principal management responsibilities had almost no effect on raising student achievement levels.

Shields and Knapp (1997), reporting on a national study of school-based reform efforts, have a different benchmark for measuring successful school restructuring efforts. They claim that existing testing measures “rarely capture the full range of goals that lie at the heart of all but the most limited school-based reform efforts” (p.290), and that using the extent of change or innovation as a measure is misleading since not all change is positive. Instead, they rely on the quality of learning opportunities made available to all students in the school (emphasizing meaning and understanding, teaching basic and advanced skills in the context of their use, and connecting learning in schools across content areas and to the real world) as a gauge for successful school reform. In this context, they discuss the importance of six dimensions in distinguishing among school-based reforms:

- Scope (how many aspects of the school are being addressed)
- Degree of focus on teaching and learning
- Time frame (how quickly are changes expected)
- Locus of authority for decision-making
- Collaborative engagement of schoolpeople and other stakeholders
- Depth and range of professional development opportunities

Although no single model stood out as being the most effective, certain combinations of variables appeared to have the most effect on the goal of offering high-quality learning opportunities to all students. These included:

- Combining a focus on curriculum and instruction with the provision of professional development opportunities in those areas

- Enhancing school-level decision-making without becoming preoccupied with the process or form of school governance
- Encouraging collaborative engagement of school staff members while providing appropriate professional development opportunities
- Balancing the scope of the reform efforts with a realistic timetable

In looking at the various studies and discourses on restructuring, a number of key points emerge that distinguish restructuring efforts from other more traditional reform movements.

- Restructuring is driven by a focus on improved student learning for all students.
- Restructuring is a long-term commitment to fundamental, systemic change at all levels of the system - the individual school, the district, the state, and the federal government.
- Restructuring requires changes in the basic beliefs and value systems that are the foundation for education.
- Restructuring requires changes in the power relationships at the school and state level, with empowerment for teachers and parents, and more authority for local school administrators in determining school visions, missions, and programs.
- Restructuring requires changes in all aspects of education - curriculum, assessment, staff development, budget, scheduling, grouping practices, and program research and design.
- Restructuring focuses on high expectations for student learning (production vs. reproduction of knowledge, student initiative and responsibility for their own learning).

- Restructuring emphasizes high professional expectations for teachers and administrators as individuals, and as collaborative members of the school restructuring team.

Having identified key components and strategies of effective school restructuring, the question again becomes how to implement these elements and changes on a school level. A key question associated with restructuring, as with all reform movements, lies in the initiation and implementation of restructuring efforts. As noted previously, many studies have documented the changes that need to take place in education. The question that continues to be asked is how to implement these changes effectively so they produce lasting results.

The Importance of the Principal in Restructuring

Role of the Principal

Restructuring studies and effective schools literature continually emphasize the need for strong educational leadership if substantial changes are to be made in the current educational system, with an emphasis on the principal as the key leader (Fullan, 1991; Patterson, 1993; Rothberg & Pawlas, 1993; Schlechty, 1990; Schmoker, 1996).

“Restructuring schools do not create themselves; they require enlightened leadership for their initiation and sustenance. Therefore, we must attend to leadership development if we are to realize restructuring potential for improving the education of our children” (Mojkowski & Bamberger, 1991, p.5).

With restructuring efforts concentrated at individual school sites, the principal becomes the pivotal person to initiate, organize, and direct the changes that need to take

place. Principals are the only people who see the whole school on a regular basis. Their position between the district administration and the school allows them to relate district initiatives with their own school goals. As the key contact person between students, staff, parents, and the community, the principal is in the best position to articulate and implement key restructuring goals by generating the support needed to make a desired outcome a reality. In this role, the principal also becomes responsible for fostering the cultural norms necessary for collaboration. “The role of the principal receives special attention because it offers the single most immediate route to school reform” (Carlin, 1992, p.46).

Prestine (1994) states that principals play a key role in facilitating change because their “position at the center of the web of relationships in the school affords the opportunity to notice those things that may serve as catalysts for change” (p.148). This allows the principal to “make opportunistic use of events and happenings, to shape processes, and to address problems” (p.148).

Research studies have shown a direct correlation between the role of principals and the effectiveness of school reform in their building, although this relationship is sometimes cited as being indirect or too complex to measure definitively. Hallinger and Heck (1996) analyzed 40 studies that explored the relationship between principal leadership behavior and school effectiveness. They concluded that principal leadership does make a difference when it is “aimed toward influencing internal school processes that are directly linked to student learning” (p. 38). These internal processes include school policies and norms (academic expectations, school mission, student opportunity to learn,

instructional organization, academic learning time), and factors that influence teacher practices. The most important role of the principal in school effectiveness is the setting of school goals through which the principal sustains a schoolwide purpose focused on student learning. Hallinger and Heck further note that, even though some of these leadership effects on school achievement appear to be indirect, “achieving results through others is the essence of leadership” (p.39).

Blase (1993) researched the “micropolitics” of effective school-based leadership, a term that refers to “the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals in organizations” (p.142). He concluded that the ability of principals to influence teachers enhanced the teacher’s ability to work more effectively with students. When principals’ goals and strategies are compatible with teachers’ professional norms and values, they “produce in teachers positive *affective* impacts (e.g., esteem, pride, satisfaction, confidence), *cognitive* impacts (e.g., awareness of issues/problems, reflection), and *behavioral* impacts (e.g., increased work involvement, consideration for students, innovation, creativity, follow-through, openness/positiveness, tolerance/patience, and better relations with principals and parents)” (p.155).

Results of a study by Heck and Marcoulides (1993) indicate that “the manner in which elementary and high school principals govern the school, build strong school climate, and organize and monitor the school’s instructional program are important predictors of academic achievement” (p.25). Leithwood (1992), in his study of transformational school leaders, concluded that maintaining a collaborative culture, fostering teacher development, and improving group problem-solving were all important

functions of principals in facilitating changes in their schools. Reitzug (1989) concluded that the following strategies of principals distinguished effective from ordinary schools: substantially more interactions between the principal and teachers; the creation of a school culture that emphasized concern for fellow staff members, students, and students' families; the setting of high expectations; and a high degree of support by principals for teachers (p.54-55).

Characteristics of Effective Principals

In order for principals to be strong leaders in restructuring their schools, they must have the necessary skills to effectively bring about change. Much of the literature on characteristics of effective principals comes from research from the effective schools movement (Johnson, 1989; Reitzug, 1989; Valentine & Bowman, 1991). However, the characteristics for principals in restructured schools show many similarities (Conley, 1992; Lewis, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1991). Table 2 (page 62) summarizes these characteristics of strong school leaders as reported in the literature. The characteristics listed are based on *Proficiencies for Principals, Third Edition* (1997), published by the National Association of Elementary School principals. As in many studies of effective characteristics, these proficiencies are broken down into two major areas of responsibility (leadership and administration/management), reflecting the two main areas of principal responsibility. It is interesting to note that the characteristics of effective principals closely match the characteristics of restructured schools in Table 1, focusing on vision-setting, the change process, collaboration and team-building, effective instruction, and curriculum development. It is also interesting to note that the some of the same

characteristics that were least noted in Table 1 - assessment and analysis of data and fiscal management - are also least mentioned in the literature on characteristics of effective principals. It may be that these two areas are possible gaps in the effective implementation of restructuring efforts, and could be a focus for future study.

Table 2
Characteristics of Effective School Principals/Leaders

	Robinson (1985) (Effective Schools)	Johnson (1989) (Effective Schools)	Mojkowski & Bamberger (1991)	Lewis (1989)	Pankake & Burnett (1990)
*Leadership Proficiencies:					
Leadership behavior (vision-setting, interpersonal skills, change process, facilitation of leadership in others)	X	X	X		X
Communication skills (Articulation of beliefs, effective oral and written skills, active listening skills)	X	X	X	X	X
Group processes (collaboration, building of consensus, conflict resolution, team-building skills)	X	X	X	X	X
Curriculum and instruction (common core of learning, curriculum development, effective instruction)	X		X	X	X
Assessment (formative and summative evaluation procedures, analysis of data, school improvement efforts)		X	X	X	
Administrative/Management Proficiencies:					
Organizational management (collaborative planning, staff hiring and organization, day-to-day procedures)	X	X	X	X	X
Fiscal management (budgeting, resource management, record-keeping)		X	X	X	
Political management (use of effective strategies to build support of stakeholders, resolve conflicts, promote effective change)	X	X	X	X	X

*Characteristics based on *Proficiencies for Principals*, 3rd edition, NAESP, 1997.

There appears to be much agreement as to what skills are needed by principals of effective restructured schools, both in the areas of leadership and management. These

correlate with the characteristics of restructured schools in general, and reflect many of the changes that principals will need to spearhead in order to bring about reform. The following list summarizes the key characteristics and skills needed by principals of restructured schools. These effective principals:

- facilitate the development of vision and direction.
- orchestrate the change process.
- create opportunities for teacher and community leadership to emerge.
- exhibit foresight and ability to predict outcomes accurately.
- tolerate uncertainty and resist stress.
- convey high expectations for students and staff.
- encourage risk-taking.
- display assertiveness, conviction, and persistence.
- listen effectively and respond to the needs of others.
- facilitate effective staff and community collaboration.
- create and manage dissonance as a way of improving the school.
- encourage examination and restructuring of the curriculum.
- encourage and model effective instructional practices.
- use evaluation, research, and analysis of school data to make program and staffing decisions.
- plan, organize, and manage time well.
- define and communicate school policies effectively.
- develop school management structures and schedules that facilitate effective student learning.
- are adept at parent and community relations.

Sergiovanni (1991) identifies five “forces of leadership” that should be used by effective principals: technical (sound management techniques), human (harnessing the

school's social and interpersonal potential), educational (expert knowledge about education and schooling), symbolic (focusing attention on matters of importance), and cultural (promoting a positive school climate). "When the forces are brought together in expressions of the principal's leadership, they provide the basis for her or his influence. The more of these forces that come to play, the more powerful the principalship will be" (p.111).

In its *Proficiencies for Principals, 3rd edition*, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) extends the idea of characteristics of strong school leaders to include prerequisite knowledge and skills. They maintain that excellent principals must also possess strong theoretical and philosophical backgrounds if they are to be effective leaders. These prerequisites include:

- Advanced understanding of the teaching and learning processes (instructional methodologies, assessment, evaluation)
- A thorough understanding of child growth and development, and of adult learning (developmentally appropriate curriculum and instructional methods, stages of adult learning)
- A broad base of knowledge, including a solid background in liberal arts (curriculum content and development)
- A sincere commitment to educational equity and excellence at all levels for all children (creating a learning environment based on mutual trust and respect, belief that all students can succeed) (NAESP, 1997, p.3)

Principal Roles in Restructuring

Given these characteristics of effective, dynamic leaders in school restructuring, what are the different roles that principals play in bringing about changes in their schools? The literature cites many different roles for school principals in restructuring, some of them additional responsibilities as a result of current school reforms and changing school

structures (Blase, 1993; Goldman et al, 1993; Goldring & Rallis, 1993); Lewis, 1989; NAESP, 1990 & 1997; Niece, 1993; Pankake & Burnett, 1990; Stronge, 1993).

A summary of the literature on the role of the principal in school restructuring produces the following list of potential roles for an effective principal:

- Manager - effectively carries out district and school policies, and manages day-to-day operations of the school such as budgeting, scheduling, transportation, building maintenance, and conflict resolution that enhances the structure and order of the school so that effective learning can take place (Heller & Paulter, 1990, p.138).
- Facilitator - “Facilitators motivate, coordinate, and legitimize the work of their teachers by taking stands based on consideration and understanding of participants’ positions on issues and then by manipulating time, space, resources, and personnel to join in moving toward the attainment of that position...the facilitator enables others to act and legitimizes their actions” (Goldring & Rallis, 1993, p.135-136).
- Politician - manages the political microsystem “in such a way that broadened awareness of instructional needs and wider involvement in the decision-making process strengthen...the political support for the school’s instructional program” (Pankake & Burnett, 1990, p.28).
- Instructional leader - “the continuous and harmonious process of releasing the creative human potential of the instructional staff of the school in such a manner that the educational goals of the school are achieved” (Pankake & Burnett, 1990, (p.57).
- Educational leader - “mobilizes the expertise, talent, and care of others. He or she is the person who symbolizes, supports, distributes, and coordinates the work of teachers as instructional leaders” (Glickman, 1991, p. 8).

- Moral leader - “connecting people morally to each other and to their work...[by] developing shared purposes, beliefs, values, and conceptions themed to teaching and learning, community building, collegiality, character development, and other school issues and concerns” (Sergiovanni, 1994, p.7).
- Spiritual leader - using symbols, rituals, ceremonies, metaphors, and stories to “anchor the faith and confidence of others, to communicate purpose, and to build passionate identification with the school (Deal & Peterson, 1994, p.6).
- Visionary (transformational) leader - “leadership that facilitates the redefinition of a people’s mission and vision, a renewal of their commitment, and the restructuring of their systems for goal accomplishment” (Leithwood, 1992, p.9).

Another role for principals in restructured schools is that of researcher and evaluator. Goldring and Rallis (1993) describe the principal as the head of a team that collects data on school programs and improvement efforts. By analyzing this data, important decisions can be made as to the effectiveness and further direction of school reform efforts. Guthrie and Koppich (1994) describe a new leadership role for principals that is an “enlargement” of transformational leader - namely Strategic Leadership. “Using much of the framework of transformational leadership - collaborative problem-solving, building organizational capacity, etc. - Strategic Leadership expands the boundaries to encompass additional crucial elements that will assist education leaders to create and sustain dynamic, productive organizations” (p.1). These additional elements include vision, inspiration, strategic orientation, integrity, organizational sophistication, and nurturing.

Changes in the Role of the Principal

Many of these roles represent a substantial change in the role of the principal in restructured schools. A report from the National Leadership Network Study Group On Restructuring Schools (1991) states:

The roles of principals must change from building manager and administrator of the status quo to coach and facilitator....Principals are expected to create dissonance as a means of pressing for improvement, to create interdependencies, to encourage risk taking, to follow as well as to lead, to use information effectively, and to foster a long-term view of educational progress. (Fredericks, 1992, p.62)

The change to site-based management in restructured schools involves many new roles for principals (Alexander, 1992; Goldman, et al, 1993; Odden & Wohlstetter, 1995; Wohlstetter & Briggs, 1994; Wohlstetter et al, 1997). Peterson and Warren (1994) give as examples of this change the principal's increased role in coordinating the work of others; managing more political activities such as facilitating, bargaining, and persuading; and finding new ways to exert power such as increased expertise, social influence, and personal charisma. They also report an increase in conflict in schools related to this transformation of school governance, a natural response to change in any organization. This places the principal in the role of mediator, problem-solver, and conflict-resolver. "While this change in school governance has frequently increased the sense of empowerment of teachers and others, it has substantially changed the principal's role, transforming it into a complex role centered within the micropolitical environment of schools" (p.234). Part of this complex process is the ability of principals to "relinquish"

some of their own power so that teachers can assume more of a leadership role (Barth, 1988; Parks & Barrett, 1994).

With a growing emphasis on site-based management, shared decision-making, and the development of “teachers as leaders,” the principal’s new role becomes that of the “leader of leaders” (Lieberman & Miller, 1990; NAESP, 1997; Parks & Barrett, 1994). Under this role, principals have two primary responsibilities - to develop leadership capacity in their schools’ new leaders, and to create conditions under which they can transfer authority to them. Based on the premise that leadership is learned and can be nurtured (Parks & Barrett, 1994), effective principals take responsibility for arranging training in the area of leadership for their staff that focuses on three areas: interpersonal skills (team and group skills, conflict resolution, diplomacy skills), conceptual skills (knowledge of curriculum, politics, restructuring programs), and technical skills (scheduling, budgeting, technology). In order to transfer this leadership to others, principals must work to identify leadership abilities within the school community, relinquish leadership by stepping aside and letting new leaders emerge, and become a supportive leader of leaders.

Another new role for principals in restructuring is establishing and maintaining a “collaborative school culture.” Peterson and Brietzke (1994) state, “In collaborative school cultures, the underlying norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions reinforce and support high levels of collegiality, team work, and dialogue about problems of practice” (p.3). When administrators and teachers work together on collaborative efforts, the level of commitment and motivation is higher, and change efforts are more successfully

implemented. This collegiality is nurtured by principals who promote teacher leadership, encourage the exchange of ideas and successful practices, and create a time and place for professional dialogue and team work. Fullan (1992) states that collaborative work cultures are needed in order to manage the multiple innovations created simultaneously by restructuring efforts. To build these collaborative cultures, “principals must concentrate on fostering vision-building; norms of collegiality that respect individuality; norms of continuous improvement; problem-coping and conflict-resolution strategies; lifelong teacher development that involves inquiry, reflective practice, collaboration and technical skills; and restructuring initiatives” (p.19).

Fullan (1991) describes another new role for principals in restructuring schools - the role of the “change agent.” “Over the last decade, research has progressed from examining the principal’s role in implementing specific innovations to her or his role in changing the very culture of the school” (p.152-153). Principals of effectively transformed schools were reported as spending more time working with staff to clarify and support innovations at the school. In his research, Miles (1993) reports two variables that were present in effective principal change agents. The first variable is the ability to develop trust, rapport, and a supportive relationship with groups and individuals involved in change efforts. The second key variable was organizational diagnosis. “It was clear that successful change agents needed conceptual frameworks for understanding schools as organizations, and needed to know how to collect data, how to feed it back, and how to help clients plan action” (p.238).

Sergiovanni (1991) and Fullan (1991) both expand this role of the principal as change agent to that of the “leader of the change facilitating team.” The principals who were the most effective in implementing change were not those that tried to lead change single-handedly; rather, they were team-oriented, working as the leader of all the change facilitators at the school as part of a change team. Schlechty (1990) describes the need for leaders to create systems in order to change systems. Five functions are necessary for this change to occur: conceptualizing the change; marketing the change; developing the change; implementing the change; and providing training and support to maintain the change (p.97-98).

This need to sustain change and restructuring efforts is just beginning to be highlighted as a new role for the principal. Shields and Knapp (1997) state, “The leadership challenges change as the task shifts from making substantial changes in classroom practice to sustaining practices that represent clear improvements” (p.294). Nadeau and Leighton (1996) introduce a new term - “Sustaining Leadership.” This is defined as:

leadership that enables a school community to re-invent itself and operate in a new mode over a long haul, well past the exhilaration associated with novelty, to become a dynamic learning organization....Moving into the second stage of transformation - sustaining change - means finding ways to renew energy and enthusiasm, to stay focused on a vision that is continuously adapting to new and sometimes unforeseen developments. (Chapter 2, p.1)

This study identified five general categories of skills needed by leaders in order to sustain reforms:

- Partnership and voice (cultivating a broad definition of community and acknowledging the contributions of all participants)
- Vision and values (becoming “keepers of the dream” and maintaining agreed-upon values in everyday actions and decisions)
- Knowledge and daring (developing relevant information bases and cultivating human resources to minimize failure while encouraging risk-taking)
- Savvy and persistence (monitoring the understanding of the nature and operations of systems, and maintaining a network of supporters to overcome resistance)
- Personal qualities (using personal qualities such as a sense of humor, effective use of language, and sensitivity to others to maintain focus and commitment).

The Leadership Paradox

The role of the principal as the leader of restructuring is extremely complex. This complexity can create a number of tensions and “paradoxes” as the principal tries to balance the forces that play out in their day-to-day jobs.

One of the first tensions that has been documented is the increase in administrative expectations and demands as the result of restructuring and increased job complexity, resulting in principals feeling overwhelmed by their jobs. “The role of the principal has in fact become dramatically more complex, overloaded, and unclear over the past decade” (Fullan, 1991, p.144). Murphy (1994) quotes numerous studies in which principals state they are “generally overwhelmed by the expectations that reform has brought” (p.39). Bredeson (1993) quotes one principal as stating, “The principal’s job is much more complex. We just keep adding to it, but never take anything out” (p.46).

Fullan (1991) reports on recent studies of principal workload, including one study in

which 90% of administrators interviewed reported an increase in demands on their time and responsibilities in the last five years. These increased demands included new program demands, district and state priorities and directives, demands from parent and community groups, administrative activities, staff involvement, and student services. These increased demands led 61% of the participants to report a *decrease* in their feelings of principal effectiveness, 84% to report a decrease in their authority, 72% to report a decrease in trust of their leadership, and 76% a decrease in principal involvement in decision-making. When asked, "Do you think the principal can effectively fulfill all the responsibilities assigned to him/her?", 91% responded "no" (Edu-con, 1984 as reported in Fullan, 1991, p.146-147).

Part of these tensions can be related to the continuing lack of clarity of the restructuring process, the principal's role in restructuring, and conflicting messages about reform from the community, district, and state. Murphy (1994) describes this uncertainty as the "absence of roadmaps" (p.41). Alexander (1992), in his study of site-based management and changes in the principal's role, states:

[Principals] are being asked not only to implement an unclearly defined innovation, but also to assume new professional roles for which there is no clear definition....They believe they are...caught in change, trying to cope, perform, and lead the transformation of their schools without a clear understanding of their ultimate role in the newly emerging process. (p.14, 16)

An indication of the increased responsibilities and job complexities of principals under educational reform initiatives can be seen by analyzing new standards for administrative leadership under specific reform plans. Hess (1995) reports that, under the Chicago School Reform Act, principals were given additional authority and

responsibilities including hiring of staff, adoption of the local school budget, and creating a school improvement plan, as well as managing the day-to-day affairs of the school.

Principals were given the ultimate accountability for the successes and failures of their school, and could be dismissed by the Local School Council if it was felt their leadership was inadequate.

The new standards for Effective Administrative Leadership under the Massachusetts Education Reform Act list six main guidelines for evaluation of principals, including effective instructional leadership, organizational leadership, administration and management, promotion of equity and appreciation of diversity, relationships with the community, and fulfillment of professional responsibilities. Listed under these six main categories are 27 subcategories, and 97 specific descriptors of effective leadership practices (Massachusetts Department of Education, 1995).

Another source of great tension for principals as a result of restructuring is the changing balance of power brought on by initiatives such as site-based management and shared decision-making. The term “empowerment” in restructuring means more than just creating opportunities for staff and parents to be part of the decision-making process. “[They] must first feel empowered enough to participate in the processes and be dedicated to the new role” (Goldring & Rallis, 1993, p.39). While this sharing of power is crucial, it can create problems for principals in many areas. One question that arises is that of accountability. “As long as decisions are successful, a leader runs little risk in sharing decision-making. However, if a decision proves unsuccessful, the leader will be

held accountable; the leader, not the group, must accept the blame for failure” (Meadows, 1990, p. 545-546).

These issues lead to another dilemma for principals dealing with site-based management - perceived loss of power. “In restructuring schools, the administrators can see power slipping away, and they’re not sure what to do in its place” (Lyon, 1994, p.2). This ability to relinquish leadership roles to other staff members, while an important part of site-based management and shared decision-making, can also be a potential source of great conflict for principals in their new roles in restructured schools (Barth, 1988; Murphy, 1994). Bredeson, in his study of role strain and role transitions, reports:

Relinquishing control was not easy, even when [principals] believed it to be imperative to successful restructuring efforts. They found themselves having to stifle their natural enthusiasm and tendency to intervene, to keep quiet as others puzzled through problems and assumed responsibility for outcomes. (p.55)

The literature reports that principals must learn new ways of yielding power. “Principals need to see themselves as having the power to get things done, not just having power over people” (Lyons, 1994, p.2). This involves learning new ways to use power through avenues such as knowledge and expertise, personal charisma, and political influence. “Where once principals could use formal authority to make or change a decision that rested within their jurisdiction, some of these principals are now at times relying on expert power, based on knowledge, or referent power, based on personal charisma, to influence decisions” (Peterson & Warren, 1994, p.228). Blase (1993) reports on the various ways that principals can influence teachers, using the term *normative-instrumental leadership* to define the need to “control” teachers at the same time as you

“empower” them. In the restructured school, principals need to find the balance between *control orientation* (i.e., eliciting teacher compliance to principal determined goals) and *empowerment orientation* (i.e., promoting teacher involvement in formal and informal decision-making).

A new term that describes this paradox of leading without dominating is *facilitative leadership*. “If dominance is power *over* someone, facilitative power is power manifested *through* someone” (Goldman et al, 1993, p.70). Conley and Goldman (1996) report that maintaining the balance required for facilitative leadership can be difficult for principals as they struggle to manage new role expectations for themselves and for teachers.

Another paradox for principals in the age of restructuring is the tension between “stability” and “instability”. Principals are constantly pressured to maintain order and structure within their schools so that effective learning can take place. Yet the whole mission of restructuring is one of change, sometimes for every aspect of the school. Deal and Peterson (1994) describe this paradox as, “If you keep changing, you will never get it right - keep changing” (p.49). They point out the difficulty of working to continuously improve the school while maintaining stability long enough to perfect promising practices. Patterson (1993) states that the challenge of leadership is to confront this “tension point of stability versus instability” (p.82). He maintains that schools must hold on to the internal stability of their core values. “Core values anchor the organization, giving it stability that allows tomorrow’s leaders to help people process constant change and

proceed toward their vision, even in the face of an unstable and complex external environment” (p.83).

The ability to “proceed toward the vision” can be another source of tension for principals in the changing world of restructuring. While the literature describes vision-setting as a necessary component of restructuring (Boyer, 1995; Conley, 1993b; Goldman, et al, 1993; Moore, 1993), Fullan (1992) warns that the setting of a school vision is not as easy as it sounds. He warns that a principal who is too narrowly committed to a particular vision or philosophy may alienate the staff. In order for a school to reach consensus and commitment to a vision, principals may have to give up some of their own strong feelings and beliefs, but at what philosophical expense? In the case of the “high-powered, charismatic principal who radically transforms the school,” too much may depend on the personal force of the leader; real progress and changes in the school’s structure and beliefs may be minimal, and decline if the leader leaves. Both Fullan (1992) and Prestine (1994) propose that setting a vision should not be a one-time act, but rather a process. “At both the organizational and the individual levels, clarity of understanding is necessary but without a rigid precision that would stifle the flexibility required. The responsibility for maintaining this delicate balance rests primarily with the principal” (Prestine, 1994, p.149). Fullan (1992) points out that, while a principal’s personal vision may have helped mark them for leadership, this vision must be open to change and reflection. “An alternative approach to vision-driven reform is one in which the principal pursues promising visions provisionally, learning as well as leading through collaboration” (p.20). The ability to express their own values without being imposing,

while drawing out and acknowledging other people's values and concerns, becomes another challenge for principals in restructuring their school.

A final paradox and source of tension for principals in restructuring is the issue of conflict creation and management. Conflict is inevitable given the changes brought about by restructuring. Peterson and Warren (1994) report that there are more decision-making groups and more opportunities for discussion, leading to the possibility of more conflict. The new governance systems associated with restructuring, including committees, councils, and informal coalitions, provide a multitude of opportunities for disagreements among various factions. Restructuring changes the normative climate to one that supports and even encourages discussion, dialogue, and disagreement. The empowerment of specific teachers may lead to resentment of other staff members, causing rifts and conflict within the faculty (Peterson & Solsrud, 1996).

Another source of increased conflict in restructuring is the role of the leader in challenging traditional structures and practices that have been comfortable for constituents (Meadows, 1990). The rapid pace of change, the uncertainty of new roles and responsibilities, and the increased need to take risks are all sources of increased conflict in the school setting. "Principals are expected to create dissonance as a means of pressing for improvement" (Fredericks, 1992, p.62).

If this conflict is not dealt with effectively, it can become an obstacle to successful restructuring. Resolving this conflict means principals must assume more of a role as mediator and conflict resolver. The prevailing view of conflict has been that disagreement and tension are bad, and show a weakness in the fundamental structure of the

organization. Patterson (1993) and Deal and Peterson (1994) urge principals to see conflict as a positive force in restructuring. "By valuing the energy of dissent, [tomorrow's leaders] let people inside and outside the organization know where they stand: honest conflict in a safe environment provides the seeds for rich solutions to organizational issues" (Patterson, p. 9). Meadows (1990) emphasizes the need to provide a safe, structured process for staff to resolve their differences openly: "Some individual and group skills - such as the constructive use of conflict and the taking of responsibility for one's actions - must be taught and modeled in order to promote and maintain a climate of trust" (p.548).

All of these additional roles and leadership paradoxes add immensely to the tensions and anxieties that principals feel as a result of the restructuring process. Bredeson (1993) studied this "role strain" in principals as part of their "role transition." He found:

...varying states and levels of anxiety manifested by feelings of having lost control, fear of failure, self-doubts about personal competence and ability to be successful, impatience and frustration, concerns about loss of professional identity, and increased feelings of uncertainty brought about by significant changes in their professional worklife. The notion of letting go of one set of professional functions and identities while learning others was described as risky, wearisome, and frustrating. (p.46)

Bredeson also found that the impact of the role strain varied, depending on the presence of individual and/or environmental moderators that helped principals deal with these increased tensions. Personal factors that helped principals moderate role strain included the compatibility of personal leadership style with role changes, individual tolerance for change processes, the principal's capacity for growth during role transition,

strength of interpersonal communications skills, and facility with group process. The principals who felt the least strain and tension were those who viewed the changes brought about by restructuring as being “legitimization of their personal leadership styles and long-standing professional practices in their buildings” (Bredeson, 1993, p.50). Environmental factors at the school and district level also helped moderate role strain. A key factor was that of trust - “trust in one another, in restructuring processes themselves, and in the likelihood of positive effects on desired students and organizational outcomes” (p.52). Other environmental factors that helped moderate role strain included the availability of time and money for restructuring initiatives, and the existence of social support systems across buildings and districts.

The reaction of principals to the changing nature of their jobs is important to note if restructuring is to be successful. Bredeson (1993) describes one strategy used by principals as “cognitive restructuring” - redefining the understanding of and meanings ascribed to one’s role in the school community.

Within the context of highly publicized school reform initiatives, these respondents were not resisting changes in their principalship role but were welcoming role transitions as opportunities to enhance leadership by tapping into the power and richness of human resources and dynamic processes in their buildings. (p.54-55)

All of these changes and tensions associated with the new roles of principals in restructuring have added to the complexity and difficulty of their jobs. They “have made the principal’s role more demanding, more uncertain, and more complex, demanding increased skills in analyzing complicated and at times perplexing...situations and requiring

new understandings of decision making, shared power, and conflict resolution” (Peterson & Warren, 1994, p.234-235).

Conclusions

This study of the history of school reform and restructuring efforts has shown that schools are currently involved in the midst of substantial changes in many areas - school governance, teacher and principal standards and expectations, student-centered curriculum, accountability, equity, and empowerment. “Public education is at a crossroads, and the choices made or not made, the routes traveled or not traveled, in the next several years are likely to generate repercussions that will be felt for some time to come” (Conley, 1993b, p.398-399).

The restructuring initiative appears to hold great promise as a way to bring about substantial changes in the way schools operate. Based on the demographics and needs of individual schools, restructuring efforts can concentrate on the specific problems and interests at each school site with a focus on improved student learning. Restructuring touches and empowers all constituencies in the public schools.

Ultimately, restructuring comes down to the behaviors of individual teachers and principals in particular educational settings. The success of restructuring depends on their willingness, along with the willingness of administrators, boards of education, state educational agencies, legislatures, the federal government, and especially community members, parents, and students, to accept changes in the “deep structure” of schools and in the goals of public education. (Conley, 1993b, p.398)

The role of the principal is a key component in the eventual success or failure of this latest reform movement. From their central position within the school, the district, and the larger community, principals are in a unique spot to articulate and model school

visions and values; to inspire, energize, and empower their constituents; to set high standards and expectations for staff professionalism and student learning; and to implement, facilitate, and sustain changes associated with restructuring efforts.

These new roles represent many changes in responsibilities for principals. "The traditional roles of principals...are changing and will continue to be reshaped, redefined, and renegotiated as restructuring occurs" (Bredeson, 1993, p.34). With these changes, however, come increased tensions and anxieties as principals try to balance new expectations and leadership paradoxes that are a result of these restructuring initiatives.

Today's pressures on the principalship show no signs of decreasing in their intensity. Future challenges include encouraging dispersed yet centered leadership, creating cohesive community out of increasingly diverse populations, being responsible without being in charge, changing rapidly in response to social needs without leaving people behind, building trust and confidence in an openly cynical society, and caring for people while challenging them to grow. Together, these challenges will continue to fill every principal's day with problems to solve, puzzles to unravel, and paradoxes to manage or endure. (Deal & Petersen, 1994, p.113)

Principals must find ways to manage these increased responsibilities and tensions if they are to remain a positive force in their schools. The response of principals to the increased pressures and expectations brought about by the restructuring movement is an area that lends itself to future study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This study was designed to investigate Massachusetts elementary principals' perceptions of the changes in their leadership roles and their schools due to the implementation of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. As the leaders in their schools, principals are in a unique position to report on the changes they have seen in their jobs and in their schools as a result of the Education Reform Act, and to comment on their perceptions of the effectiveness of this reform. This chapter presents the research design and methodology, research procedures, sample selection, data collection and analysis, and validity and reliability.

Research Design and Methodology

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative research methods to explore the perceptions and experiences of elementary principals in Massachusetts, focusing on their reactions to the changes brought about by the Education Reform Act of 1993. The intent of the study was to discover and describe principals' reactions to the Reform Act, rather than test a hypothesis. Two types of research methods were used - a questionnaire containing quantitative questions and open-ended responses, and follow-up in-depth interviews. Marshall and Rossman (1999) justify the use of questionnaires in qualitative research to "learn about the distribution of characteristics, attitudes, or beliefs" (p.129). Tuckman (1994) defines the use of these two methods in research as follows:

Questionnaires and interviews are used by researchers to convert into data the information directly given by a person (subject). By providing access to what is "inside a person's head," these approaches make it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes and dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs). Questionnaires and interviews can also be used to discover what experiences have taken place (biography) and what is occurring at the present. (p.216)

The questionnaire elicited both quantitative and qualitative data in order to anchor the study in objective parameters such as region of the state, age, gender, and number of years as principal. Questions were also included relating to principals' experiences with Massachusetts Education Reform: positive and negative role changes, perceptions of successes and failures, job tensions, and coping mechanisms. A few selected open-ended questions were also utilized in the questionnaire in order to give principals a chance to more clearly state their opinions and concerns about the Education Reform Act, and allow their personal "voices" to be heard.

The decision to use a mixed-methods questionnaire was made in order to gather the maximum amount of information from as many elementary principals as possible. According to MESPA (Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association), there are 1,257 public elementary schools (K-5) in Massachusetts. If 300 questionnaires were sent out (with an average response rate of 30%), this could mean a return of 90 surveys. Using strictly open-ended responses would make it difficult to record and analyze this data in a meaningful way. The use of mostly quantitative responses gave a more comprehensive overview of the major issues and concerns effecting elementary principals. The use of quantitative data in qualitative research is documented in the literature:

Quantitative data can have conventional uses in qualitative research. It can suggest trends in a setting....It can also provide descriptive information...about the population....These kinds of data may open up avenues to explore and questions to answer. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p.152)

Based on information obtained from the questionnaires, ten follow-up in-depth interviews were conducted to explore principals' perceptions of education reform in greater detail, leading to a more definitive understanding of the complex nature of their jobs, the changes they have experienced, and the methods they have used to cope with these

changes. The criteria used to select these ten principals is discussed later in this chapter under "Sample Selection."

The qualitative approach used in these interviews was chosen in order to give a direct voice to the principals, since the purpose of this study was to explore their personal perceptions and feelings related to educational reform. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) state, "the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (p.94). Hallinger, Murphy, and Hausman (1991) give a similar justification for the use of this qualitative method in their study of principals' perceptions of school reform:

Because so little is known about principals' views on restructuring, we decided that an exploratory study employing qualitative methodology would be most appropriate. In a similar vein, because our goal was to portray principals' voices, we used in-depth interviewing. Finally, because our objective was to probe deeply into principals' perspectives and to develop rich descriptions of their views on restructuring, we chose a small sample with whom we could work more intensively. (p. 3)

In-depth interviews can take many forms, from highly structured to less-structured or non-directive (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Langenbach, Vaughan, & Aagaard, 1994; Seidman, 1991). Marshall and Rossman (1999) contend that "qualitative in-depth interviews are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories....The participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it" (p.108). For this study, standard questions were developed that were asked of each principal in order to provide consistency in the interviews. However, each principal was able to expand on these topics and other topics of interest to them as they related to their experiences with the Education Reform Act.

Research Procedures

In order to develop a comprehensive questionnaire, preliminary interviews were held with four principals in order to explore current issues and concerns relating to Education Reform. These principals represented urban, rural, and suburban school systems. The fourth principal interviewed in the preliminary study is now working for a private consulting firm facilitating principal training and certification. Preliminary interview questions were developed based on the researcher's knowledge of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, a study of the principal as a school reform leader, and her personal experience as a principal and administrator in urban, rural, and suburban settings. These interviews were transcribed and categorized according to major areas of concern and interest.

Using information from these preliminary interviews, as well as sample surveys collected by the researcher, a mixed methods questionnaire was developed that included 58 items using a five-point Likert Scale. The Likert Scale chosen consisted of five responses: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, and DK-Don't Know. The responses were designed this way to increase the likelihood that respondents would either agree or disagree with the question, rather than respond with a middle, neutral answer. These items were divided into five sections matching the first five research questions:

- Collaboration and Time
- Vision and Leadership
- Massachusetts Education Reform Provisions
- Principal Support and Stress
- Student Learning

The questionnaire also included opportunities for open-ended responses from the principals. After each of the five sections, a space was provided for "other comments

regarding the impact of Mass. Ed. Reform” on each topic. The last page of the questionnaire consisted of three open-ended questions focusing on changes in their jobs, major obstacles to effective reform, and suggested changes for effective reforms which aligned with the sixth research question. Demographic information was also included to gather information on gender, population and structure of the school, and experience as a principal.

An open-ended question was also included in the demographic section that asked principals to describe their leadership style, an important variable in the study of education reform. The original intent of the researcher was to provide a checklist on leadership styles, but no adequate checklist or short, descriptive categories were found that met the researcher’s specifications. The decision was made to include an open-ended question on leadership style that could be analyzed qualitatively to obtain the necessary research information.

The original questionnaire was piloted by ten selected principals and an educational researcher to test for organization, clarity, and length. Suggested revisions were made to specific questions that were ambiguous, and redundant or non-essential questions were eliminated in order to shorten the length of the survey. The final survey consisted of ten demographic questions, 53 Likert Scale items divided into the five sections, opportunity for open-ended comments at the end of each section, and three open-ended questions at the end of the survey (Appendix A).

The final survey was mailed out to 302 elementary principals with a cover letter explaining the background, purpose, and structure of the study (Appendix B). A follow-up post card was mailed out two weeks after the initial mailing to encourage principals to return the survey as soon as possible (Appendix C).

Principals had the option of returning the survey anonymously, or signing a form indicating their willingness to be interviewed (Appendix D). From these latter responses, ten principals were selected for 45-60 minute in-depth interviews on their perceptions of the impact of the Education Reform Act on their jobs. In order to maintain some consistency among the principals interviewed, 16 standard questions were developed to guide the interview to insure coverage of primary topics, while still allowing the interviewee the freedom to structure and expand his or her statements to the greatest extent possible (Appendix E).

Sample Selection

Principals for the questionnaire were selected from the Massachusetts Department of Education School Directory, 1997-1998 (the most current one available). A systematic sampling process was used to identify every fourth elementary principal (K-5) in the directory, yielding 302 names. By highlighting every fourth elementary principal in the directory, a representative group of principals was identified representing small, medium, and large school districts. Of the principals chosen, 165 (55%) were male, and 137 (45%) were female. Of this sample, 129 (42.7%) were from urban school districts, 56 (18.5%) were from rural school districts, and 117 (38.7%) were from suburban school districts.

The designation of urban, rural, and suburban districts was based on the "Kind of Community" classification scheme developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education (1985). In addition to listing schools as urban, rural, and suburban, the original classification also includes categories listed as growth communities; small economic centers; and resort/retirement and artistic communities. In order to convert the latter three categories, calls were placed to the superintendent's office in each of those 42 towns, asking them to designate their town as urban, rural, or suburban. (After extensive research,

no other state or federal classification was found to exist that listed only the three categories of urban, rural, and suburban.)

The ten principals for the interviews were chosen from the 23 principals who responded to the request to be interviewed (Table 3). Principals were selected based on gender, size of school, kind of community, years of experience, percentage of free/reduced lunch students (indicative of socio-economic status), and where in the state they were a principal in order to provide a representative group. Five principals were males and five were females. The size of the schools ranged from 180-570 students, with an average size of 379. Two of the principals were from rural schools, four from urban schools, and four from suburban schools. Years of experience ranged from 6-26 years, with an average of 13.6 years. Areas of the state included: Northeast-2; Boston area-1; Southeast-2; Cape Cod-1; Central-1; West-3.

Table 3
Demographic Data: Principal Interviews

Principal	Category	Location	Gender	Free lunch %	Years as Principal	Size of school	Grades
1	Rural	West	M	25%	10	180	PK-6
2	Rural	West	F	9%	10	383	PK-6
3	Suburban	SE	F	12%	14	490	K-5
4	Suburban	South	F	13%	11	440	K-5
5	Suburban	Central	M	12%	15	430	PK-3
6	Suburban	Cape	M	7%	26	300	K-4
7	Urban	West	F	11%	6	360	K-5
8	Urban	Boston	M	40%	25	370	K-8
9	Urban	NE	F	42%	7	570	K-5
10	Urban	NE	M	8%	12	270	PK-4

Data Collection and Analysis

Quantitative data collected from the questionnaire was entered and tabulated using Microsoft Excel. This included demographic information and responses to the Likert-scale items. Since this quantitative data was for background and descriptive purposes, only the total number and percentages of responses on the Likert Scale for each item were calculated. Tables for each of the five sections were developed displaying this information.

Open-ended responses from the questionnaire were also entered into Microsoft Excel. These included responses to the question on leadership style, comments from the five individual sections, and comments from the three final open-ended questions. These comments were then analyzed for common “patterns, themes, and categories” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.155). Codes were developed that classified and conceptualized this qualitative data; each comment was then marked with the appropriate codes in order to analyze, sort, and report on the data.

The ten principal interviews were fully transcribed. Each interview was then examined and color-coded to match the six sections on the questionnaire in order to analyze and understand the principals’ perceptions of educational reform. Principals’ comments as they related to each of the six sections were entered into a chart in order to group the responses and find common themes.

Validity and Reliability

Three methods of data collection were used in this study - Likert-scale responses, open-ended comments on the questionnaire, and transcriptions and analysis of in-depth principal interviews. The reliability of the information obtained in this study was checked by comparing and contrasting the information from these three methods as they related to each of the research questions. The responses from the questionnaire were also shared with the principals at the end of their interviews, and clarifying comments were transcribed

and analyzed. The transcriptions of the principal interviews were returned to each principal to give them an opportunity to clarify their statements.

Common topics of this study were also compared to the results of a more limited study conducted by the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association in 1998 on conditions of the principalship since the Education Reform Act was implemented in 1993. Discrepancies and agreements in results between the two surveys were analyzed, and are reported in the analysis of the data which follows in Chapter 4.

The experience of the researcher gave further validity to this study. As an elementary school principal for the last ten years, the researcher has had the unique opportunity to personally experience the changes that have occurred in this position as a result of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act. Other experience includes eighteen years in public education as a regular and special education teacher, and regular and special education administrator in over fifteen different schools in four different school districts. The settings for these schools ranged from inner-city urban schools in Boston, to rural schools in the Western part of the state, to suburban schools in Central Massachusetts. The size of these schools varied from under 200 to over 700 students. This broad background allowed the researcher to bring an extensive view of education in the state to this research study, and helped her relate and be more sensitive to principals' experiences in many different school settings. The researcher was also better able to engage fellow principals in a dialogue about Education Reform, as well as analyze and comment on their perceptions of reform efforts in Massachusetts.

The findings from this study are reported in Chapter 4. Conclusions and recommendations drawn from these findings are discussed in Chapter 5, along with recommendations for further research on the topics of education reform and the principals' leadership role in reform efforts.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected during the study of elementary principals and their perceptions of Massachusetts Education Reform. The study was a two-part process, starting with a mixed-methods questionnaire to gather baseline data, and concluding with interviews of principals for more in-depth knowledge and understanding of the issues. The study was designed to investigate the perceptions of Massachusetts elementary principals towards the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. This was a comprehensive reform law that changed many of the responsibilities and working conditions of principals. As leaders in their schools, principals are in a unique position to report on the changes they have seen in their jobs and their schools as a result of the Education Reform Act, and to comment on their perceptions of the effectiveness of this reform.

This results of this study are reported in ten sections. It should be noted that an additional section not included on the original questionnaire has been added that describes positive outcomes of the Education Reform Act as reported by principals in this study. Although principals were not asked this question directly, many of them commented on the positive aspects of Education Reform on both the questionnaire and in the interviews. It was felt this was an important topic that should be included in the study in order to give a complete picture of principals' perceptions of Education Reform and its impact on the schools in Massachusetts. The ten sections of results included in chapter 4 are:

1. Demographic Data
2. Collaboration and Time
3. Vision and Leadership
4. Massachusetts Education Reform Act Provisions
5. Principal Support and Stress
6. Student Learning
7. Major Job Changes as a Result of Education Reform
8. Major Obstacles to Effective Educational Reform
9. Positive Outcomes of Education Reform
10. Recommended Changes to Education Reform

Discussion of Results

The first part of the study was a questionnaire containing demographic questions, quantitative questions using a five-point Likert Scale, and open-ended response questions. The questionnaire was sent to 302 elementary principals utilizing a systematic sampling process to identify every fourth elementary principal in the Massachusetts Department of Education School Directory, 1997-1998. The questionnaire was returned by 96 principals, for a response rate of 31.7 %. One principal declined to fill out the questionnaire, and asked that her name be taken off the list. One principal worked in a grade 7-12 school, so the data was not included in this study. The remaining 94 questionnaires were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Since the quantitative data was for background and descriptive purposes, only the total number and/or percentages of responses were calculated.

Based on responses from the questionnaires, ten representative principals were interviewed to gain a more in-depth understanding of their perceptions of the impact of the Education Reform Act on their jobs.

Demographic Data

Demographic data was collected on the questionnaire to obtain a clearer picture of the backgrounds of respondents for three purposes: 1. to ensure that the respondents were representative of a random selection of principals and school profiles; 2. to analyze the pattern of respondents for significant differences that might effect the integrity of the study; and 3. to discern factors that give insights into the implementation of education reform.

The following charts show the backgrounds of principals and their school profiles. The data shows that the respondents are representative of a wide variety of school settings and principal experiences that are consistent with a random sample of participants.

Table 4
Demographic Data: Years as Principal

No. of years	Years as principal: # of responses	Years in current school: # of responses
Less than 1	2	2
1-5	30	45
6-10	22	21
11-20	23	13
20+	17	12
No answer		1

Table 4 highlights the number of years that respondents have been a principal, ranging from less than 1 year to 30 years. The average number of years was 11.5 years. The length of time as principals in their current building ranged from less than 1 year to 29 years, with an average of 8.8 years. This latter data is interesting to note, as concerns have been raised about the impact of the Reform Act on principal tenure and willingness to stay on the job, given the many changes brought about by the legislation.

Since the Education Reform Act was 5 years old at the time of the survey, it is important to note how many years each respondent had been a principal. A total of 64% had been principals for 6 or more years, giving them the perspective of changes that had taken place as a result of the implementation of the Reform Act. A total of 34% had been principals for 5 or less years; these respondents were able to give their perspectives on how the Reform Act effected the implementation of their jobs, but would not have been as clear about any changes the Reform Act has caused. However, even within the five years since the passage of the Reform Act, many changes have occurred in jobs and responsibilities of principals as different aspects of the Reform Act have been implemented, i.e. curriculum frameworks, MCAS testing, site-based management, and loss of tenure and collective bargaining. Therefore, it was felt this latter group of principals was able to comment authoritatively on many of the changes that have occurred in their jobs and their schools as a result of the Reform Act.

In the survey, 15 out of 94 principals (16%) reported that they were principals in more than one school. Of those 15, 14 reported that this made it difficult for them to be an effective leader. In addition, one respondent who was currently a principal in just one

school reported that he had previously been a principal in two schools and that it had made it difficult for him to be an effective leader. This information is important when looking at the effectiveness of principals in implementing educational reforms and their ability to be educational leaders in their schools. The impact of a principal leading more than one school is an area for future research and study.

Table 5
Demographic Data: Gender and Location

	Questionnaires Sent			Questionnaires Returned	
	Number	Percentage		Number	Percentage
Gender:					
Male	165	55%		53	56%
Female	137	45%		41	44%
Location:					
Urban	129	42.7%		27	28.7%
Rural	56	18.5%		12	12.8%
Suburban	117	38.7%		54	57.4%
No answer				1	1.1%

As can be seen from Table 5, the response rate from male and female principals was in proportion to the percentage of males and females who received the original questionnaire: Males - 55% of questionnaires sent, 56% of questionnaires returned; Females - 45% of questionnaires sent, 46% of questionnaires returned.

It is significant to note that an analysis of the response rate based on location shows that many fewer questionnaires from urban schools were returned than would be expected. Almost 43% of the questionnaires mailed went to principals in urban schools. Only 28.7% of the questionnaires returned were from urban locations, a decrease of 14%.

The percentage of returns from rural schools was lower by 5.7%. In direct contrast, the rate of returns from suburban schools was higher by 18.7%.

The poor return from urban school settings limits the ability to generalize the results of this study to urban schools. Possible reasons for this poor return include increased time commitments of urban principals that effected their ability to complete and return the survey, disenchantment with the reform process that effected their interest in completing and returning the survey, or a difference in the application of the Reform Act in urban settings that effected the appropriateness of the questionnaire to urban locations. The poor returns from urban schools is particularly disturbing given that the Education Reform Act was written to improve the academic performance of the poorest performing schools, mainly in urban settings. This finding is an area for future research and study.

Other demographic data that was obtained gives a picture of the types of schools involved in the study. The number of elementary schools in the school system gives an idea of the size of the district. The number of schools in the school district ranged from 1 to 75, with an average of 9.2. Student enrollment for each school ranged from 130 to 1500, with an average size of 442 students. The percentage of students on free or reduced lunch (an indication of socio-economic status) ranged from 1% to 95%, with an average of 26%. The grade structure of responding schools ranged from a school that was just pre-kindergarten to a school that was pre-kindergarten to grade 12. More schools had a Kindergarten-grade 5 grade structure than any other configuration. This data is summarized in tables 6, 7, 8, and 9 (pages 97-98).

Table 6
Demographic Data: Size of District

No. of elementary schools in your district	No. of responses
1 school	5
2-5 schools	42
6-10 schools	27
11-20 schools	6
21-30 schools	5
31+ schools	6
No answer	3

Table 7
Demographic Data: Size of School

Student enrollment	No. of schools
Less than 200	6
201-300	16
301-400	29
401-500	14
501-600	13
601-700	6
701-999	5
1000+	3
No answer	2

Table 8
Demographic Data: Free or Reduced Lunch

Students on free or reduced lunch	No. of schools		Students on free or reduced lunch	No. of schools
Less than 1%	3		51-60%	0
1-5%	17		61-70%	4
6-10%	13		71-80%	6
11-20%	14		81-90%	1
21-30%	10		91-100%	2
31-40%	7		No answer	10
41-50%	7			

Table 9
Demographic Data: Grade Structure

Grade levels	No. of schools		Grade levels	No. of schools		Grade levels	No. of schools
*PK	1		PK-12	1		1-4	1
PK-1	1		*K-3	1		1-5	1
PK-2	4		K-4	9		3-6	1
PK-3	5		K-5	29		4-6	1
PK-4	5		K-6	12		5-8	1
PK-5	6		K-8	5		No answer	2
PK-6	5						
			*PK-Pre-Kindergarten				
			**K-Kindergarten				

Data was also collected on the type of help that principals have in their schools - assistant or vice principals, curriculum specialists, or other personnel (Table 10, p.99). This information is important when considering the amount of work and time required of principals under Education Reform, especially in larger schools. The lack of adequate administrative help and support puts more stress on principals, and requires them to spend more time on the job. The data shows that, while principals in larger schools generally have the support of a vice-principal and/or curriculum specialist, many of them do not. Of the 94 respondents to the survey, only 21 reported having the support of a full-time vice-principal (22%). Of the 15 principals of two schools, 9 did not have a vice-principal or any other help (60%). This is especially concerning, as they had reported earlier that they felt ineffective as leaders due to having more than one school.

In order to ensure quality education, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) recommends additional administrative assistance when enrollment exceeds 400 students (NAESP, 1996, p.3). In 1998, a ten year NAESP study

found that the number of principals who reported having at least one assistant principal dropped to 19.8%, down from 32.4% in 1988. This returned the number of assistant principals to a similar level reported in 1978 (Doud & Keller, 1998, p.106-107). The need for adequate support for principals as they work to implement Education Reform is an area for further consideration by the Department of Education.

Table 10
Demographic Data: Principal Support

Student enrollment	No. of schools	Ass't/Vice Principal	Curriculum Specialist	Teaching or Part-time VP	Ass't VP & Curric. Spec.	Other
Less than 200	6			1		
201-300	16	1	3	1		
301-400	29	2	2	1	1	
401-500	14	3	2	1		
501-600	13	6	2	1	1	
601-700	6	1	1	1	1	
701-999	5				3	2 VPs - 2
1000+	3	1				Co-prin-1 3 VPs-1
Prin in 2 schls	15	3		1	1	2 VPs-1

The last question in the demographic section was on leadership style. As noted in the literature review section, the leadership style of a principal is a key factor in the successful implementation of effective school-based reform. Principals in Massachusetts must have the necessary leadership qualities if they are going to successfully implement the basic tenets of the Education Reform Act in their schools. These include skills in setting visions, understanding and facilitating the change process, articulating beliefs, listening to others, collaborating and consensus-building, and facilitating leadership in

others (NAESP, 1997). Linda Driscoll (1996), in her study of Massachusetts elementary principal's leadership role in building-based change, states, "... the administrator's role is one that involves articulating a strong vision, creating a school culture of shared leadership and collegiality, encouraging staff growth and development, and creating an environment which fosters exploration, human satisfaction, and responsibility for solving problems" (p.2).

As noted earlier, no checklist or short descriptive categories on leadership style were found that met the researcher's specifications. Instead, an open-ended question on leadership style was included that could be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to obtain the needed research information. The results of this question are listed in Table 11.

Table 11
Responses of Principals: Leadership Styles

Leadership style	No.	%	Leadership style	No.	%
Collaborative/inclusive/participatory	49	52%	Accountable	3	3%
Shared decision-making	16	17%	Attention to detail/efficient	3	3%
Supportive/encouraging	15	16%	Delegates	3	3%
Open/listens/seeks input	14	15%	Leads by example	3	3%
Involved/hands-on	10	11%	Low key	3	3%
Consensus builder	9	10%	Pragmatic	3	3%
Respect for teachers	9	10%	Authoritative	2	2%
Flexible/combination of styles	7	7%	Change agent	2	2%
Democratic	6	6%	Coach	2	2%
Empowering	6	6%	Controlling	2	2%
Goal-oriented	6	6%	Firm	2	2%
High expectations	6	6%	Positive	2	2%
Equitable/fair	4	4%	Process oriented	2	2%
Facilitative	4	4%	Innovative	1	1%
Instructional leader/focus on excellence	4	4%	Introspective	1	1%
			Visionary	1	1%

An analysis of the survey responses on leadership style yielded a profile that was very similar to the characteristics needed by principals to effectively restructure their schools, as reported in the literature. As shown by the chart, principals who were surveyed see themselves as collaborative, supportive, open, involved, and empowering. They believe in shared decision-making and consensus building. They have respect for the skills and experience of their teachers, and have high expectations for quality learning. This collaborative leadership style is in contrast to the more autocratic and directive style that characterized principals before the advent of restructuring. Even the four principals who listed “authoritative” and “controlling” in the survey did so in combination with more collaborative styles. An example of this is the principal of the 1500 student, K-8 school, who states, “Participatory democrat, authoritative when/where issues pertain to student safety/security” (questionnaire # 91).

The responses to the question on leadership style indicate that the principals surveyed have the characteristics one would look for in order for them to successfully implement the Education Reform Act in Massachusetts. Specific comments from this question show that principals appear to be doing what is necessary in their schools to lead the expected reforms:

- I set challenges for the staff and we jointly work towards solutions. (#26)
- One which allows classroom teachers a fair amount of autonomy while, at the same time, my primary focus is on what occurs in classrooms. (#32)
- In an effective school the principal has a clear vision of where the school is going and communicates it to staff, students, and parents. (#12)
- [I] provide opportunities for teachers to lead change. (#44)

- [I pave] the way for staff so that they may creatively meet the needs of students. (#51)

A much larger survey of Massachusetts elementary principals' leadership style confirms this finding. Driscoll (1996) reported:

When principals described their leadership style, only one respondent described himself as directive, one hundred and fifty (83%) described themselves as collaborative, and twenty-nine (16%) described themselves as democratic. The directive style obviously has become less valued, with principals seeing themselves as primarily collaborative in their dealings with staff. (p.115)

Research Questions

Six research questions were explored through 94 questionnaires and follow-up interviews with ten principals. The six questions represented the following aspects of Massachusetts Education Reform:

- Collaboration and time
- Vision and leadership
- Massachusetts Education Reform provisions
- Principal support and stress
- Student learning
- Changes and obstacles

The questionnaires contained both Likert Scale questions and questions with open-ended responses for the first five research questions. Three open-ended response questions at the end of the questionnaire probed principals' perceptions of the last question on changes and obstacles (see Appendix A).

The ten principals who were chosen for the interviews represented a cross-section of various demographic factors as indicated in Table 12. Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the principal and information about their specific district.

Table 12
Principal Interview Candidates

"Name"	Category	Location	Years as Principal	Date Interviewed
"Betsy"	Urban	Northeast	7	6/9/99
"Bob"	Rural	West	10	4/6/99
"Emily"	Urban	West	6	4/29/99
"Joe"	Suburban	Cape	26	6/14/99
"John"	Suburban	Central	15	4/16/99
"Kathy"	Rural	West	10	4/22/99
"Linda"	Suburban	South	11	3/24/99
"Mark"	Urban	Northeast	12	6/29/99
"Mary"	Suburban	Southeast	14	3/24/99
"Peter"	Urban	Boston	25	3/29/99

Research Question #1: Collaboration and Time

Given that the Massachusetts Education Reform Act seeks to promote increased collaboration and site-based management, how do elementary principals in Massachusetts perceive changes in collaboration in their schools due to Education Reform, and how has this effected the time spent on their jobs?

Principal responses on the questionnaire and the follow-up interviews revealed both positive and negative effects of the Education Reform Act on site-based management. The negative impact of time requirements was a key issue for almost all principals.

Table 13
Responses of Principals: Collaboration and Time

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	No Answer
1.1	Site-based management has increased in my building since Mass. Ed. Reform.	19 20%	40 43%	22 23%	8 9%	3 3%	2 2%
		SA/A: 63%		SD/D: 32%			
1.2	Teachers are working cooperatively with me to implement the changes mandated by Mass. Ed. Reform.	29 31%	60 64%	2 2%	2 2%	1 1%	
		SA/A: 95%		SD/D: 4%			
1.3	I have adequate time in my job to focus on school improvement efforts as opposed to day-to-day management tasks.		12 13%	39 41%	43 46%		
		SA/A: 13%		SD/D: 87%			
1.4	I spend time in my school planning and discussing curriculum and instruction with my staff.	10 11%	65 69%	12 13%	6 6%	1 1%	
		SA/A: 80%		SD/D: 19%			
1.5	I am spending more time on my job due to the added responsibilities of Mass. Ed. Reform.	59 63%	25 27%	5 5%	2 2%	3 3%	
		SA/A: 90%		SD/D: 7%			
1.6	Important educational decisions in my school are made by a consensus of teachers.	16 17%	56 60%	19 20%	2 2%		1 1%
		SA/A: 77%		SD/D: 22%			
1.7	I work as part of a district team to discuss and develop needed reforms in the district.	17 18%	63 67%	9 10%	4 4%		1 1%
		SA/A: 85%		SD/D: 14%			
1.8	There has been an increase in collaboration with the community as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform.	12 13%	53 56%	23 24%	2 2%	4 4%	
		SA/A: 69%		SD/D: 26%			

For this research question, principals were asked to respond to eight questions using a 5-point Likert Scale, with the option of adding additional comments at the end of the section. The results of the first eight questions are listed in Table 13 by number of responses and percentage of responses. An additional calculation was generated that combines the percentages of “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” (SA/A), and “Strongly

Disagree” and “Disagree” (SD/D). This combined score makes it easier to see how many respondents agreed or disagreed overall to the question.

In analyzing the responses to the questions on Collaboration and Time, two trends appear. First, principals reported they are working with their staffs, district, and community to implement the basic tenets of the Education Reform Act as intended by the legislation. Listed in order of agreement, principals reported:

- Teachers are working cooperatively with principals to implement changes mandated by Education Reform (95%).
- Principals are working as part of a district team to discuss and develop needed reforms (85%).
- Principals are spending time with their staff planning and discussing curriculum and instruction (80%).
- Important educational decisions are being made by a consensus of teachers (77%).
- There has been an increase in collaboration with the community (69%).
- Site-based management has increased (63%).

It should be noted that comments included in the open-ended portion of this section indicate that some principals felt they were already collaborating with the community and employing site-based management before the advent of the Education Reform Act, which is a possible explanation for the lower percentage of agreement with the last two statements.

The other trend that was noted from this section related to the amount of time principals feel they are spending on their jobs as a result of the increased collaboration and responsibilities due to Education Reform. Responding to question 1.5, 90% of the

principals felt they were spending more time on their jobs due to the added responsibilities of Mass. Ed. Reform. Of that number, 63% strongly agreed with that statement. On question 1.3, 87% of the principals felt they did not have enough time on their jobs to focus on school improvement efforts as opposed to day-to-day management tasks, with 46% feeling strongly about this issue. This question of adequate time has a major impact on a principal's ability to fully implement all the requirements of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act. Even since this survey was completed, another major responsibility has been added to the principal's job in the form of the Individual Professional Development Plan that must be developed by every teacher, then discussed and approved by the principal. Just this one task adds considerably to the work-load of the principal.

The open-ended responses to this section reinforce and clarify the answers to the Likert Scale questions. On the issue of collaboration, principals responded that the formation of School Councils has been one of the main avenues for increasing collaboration with the community. Many principals reported they were already doing site-based management and collaboration before the advent of Ed. Reform. Another common theme was the need for more time in order to effectively collaborate with staff. Principals suggested adding more time to the school day or school year in order for faculty to meet, although school budgets would have to be able to handle the extra cost. Principals also reported that this focus on collaboration has put more pressure on staff. As one respondent noted, "To be most effective more collaboration time is necessary.

Ed. Reform was adopted on an already full time schedule. Staff is under tremendous stress of how to do everything in the given amount of time” (#43).

Of the 27 principals who included a response, 17 commented on the increased time that is needed to implement Ed. Reform, and how that increased time has negatively effected their jobs and their personal lives. Key points made by principals relative to time issues included:

- The extra time required for meetings and collaboration takes away from time they felt could be better spent working with students and teachers, and focusing on school improvement efforts.
- The amount of time principals work at night and on week-ends interferes with their personal lives.
- Principals are feeling overwhelmed by the added time demands.
- More time for collaboration with staff is needed, either through extending the school day or school year.

Some of the comments from principals illustrate these concerns about time very clearly. Principals' comments included:

I work from 8:00 AM or earlier to 7:00 PM daily - have dinner and work from 8:30 PM to 10:30 PM or 11:00 PM nightly. This does not include several hours every weekend. The job has become a monster and the public focused on useless minutiae. (#7)

The role of the principal has greatly changed under Ed. Reform. The amount of time needed to do this job has also increased as well. It feels like I work 24 hrs. a day at this job. I'm often at meetings 2-3 times a week. I attend parent-children school events on weekends etc. It makes it difficult to find time to "have a life." (#71)

I now have so many meetings to prepare for, to attend, and to do follow-up work and reports that it leaves me less and less time to actually do things to improve my school. All of the principals in my school system feel overwhelmed. (#77)

These responses from principals correlate with the results of a survey conducted by the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association in 1997 on the status of elementary and middle school principals since the passage of the Education Reform Act in 1993. In the analysis of the MESPA survey (1998), 70% of the principals reported that duties had been added to their job responsibilities, and 91% reported having to attend up to 10 additional meetings per month. In addition, "30% reported that up to 10 hours per week had been added in implementation of the curriculum frameworks, while another 10% reported that up to 20 hours per week had been added for this purpose" (MESPA, 1998, p.4). On the issue of how principals use their time, the report stated:

Sixty-six percent felt strongly that the greatest demand on their time is in the area of management. Only 6% felt strongly that they are able to direct the major focus of their time to the improvement of student learning and 52% said that they are not able to spend time on this. (p.7)

Other comments in this section indicate some of the obstacles principals are encountering as they work to implement the Mass. Ed. Reform Act. Union contracts are cited as limiting the availability of teachers and the amount of time that principals have for collaborative work. In some districts, principals reported that the superintendent and/or school committee still control major decisions, limiting the principals' ability to bring about effective reforms. One principal stated:

Mass. Ed. Reform is a complete failure. The local superintendent and committee give me absolutely no autonomy. I exercise it, though, because I am mission-oriented. I know they can't fire me because the community and staff support my decisions. (#60)

The principal interviews further explored the issues of time and collaboration, with comments reflecting the primary findings from the questionnaires. All ten principals interviewed valued the emphasis on site-based management and collaboration, and 9 out of 10 felt that they had been operating this way even before Ed. Reform, since this was their leadership style. Linda noted that:

The teachers and I were working on a lot of these things together anyway. I think any good leader realizes that you're only as effective as the people you're working with, and, if you've got their support, then you're going to go places, and if you don't you're not going any place. So, there may be a few places that we formally include people that we may not have before, but, for the most part, the collaboration was there. Because if the teachers don't feel a part of something then it's real hard to just top-down. But otherwise, I think it would have happened anyway. (p.2)

While principals valued site-based management and collaboration, only three principals felt that the Ed. Reform Act had positively effected their ability to involve staff and community in the decisions made in their schools. Mark felt Ed. Reform had given him the leverage to insist on collaboration and shared-decision making with his staff. John said, "Ed. Reform has given me the leverage to have school-based management - empower my teachers" (p.2). Bob stated:

I am working more with teachers in curriculum development and even things down to schedules....I would say that, prior to Ed. Reform, I felt much more directed by a superintendent of schools, and I was an elementary principal and that was the way things came, kind of from top-down. And we're managing much more collaboratively now. And there's no question that's come partly as the push from Ed. Reform trying to get more involvement of people and what's going on in schools. (p.4)

Six out of ten principals felt that the Ed. Reform Act had negatively effected site-based management and collaboration in their schools, for one of two reasons. First,

principals felt that Ed. Reform had created more top-down directives from both the district and the state, in direct contrast to the intent of the law. This has led to less autonomy for principals, as illustrated by the following comments:

I think something's been lost with the meaning of what school-based management is, or was supposed to be. I think it's working backwards. To develop the changes being mandated by Ed. Reform, your school buildings are supporting your central office, as opposed to central office providing the ancillary services in support of your buildings. And it's no fault of central office. They are being imposed to have all of these changes come about. (John, p.1)

One of the things which was widely supported in the research was school-based management. But I find that increasingly it has become highly centralized at the state level. Prior to school reform, we had a great deal of autonomy at the local level....The local community had the autonomy to decide what was taught, how it was taught, and what materials were going to be used. Now, it has all been collected at the state...how we will use virtually every minute of the day, what subjects we will teach, what is important in the learning. (Joe, p.1)

Secondly, principals stated that the added responsibilities, increased collaborative meetings, and emphasis on frameworks and testing gave them less time to consult and collaborate with staff on important school issues. Mark commented, "I think Ed. Reform has empowered parents, students, and community to have more input into schools without any consideration at all as to how can we do that in a controlled, and logical, and workable way" (p.2). Mary talked about a change in her leadership role from instructional leader to more of a manager as a result of Ed. Reform, stating:

I find with the new regs, you're spending more and more time in the core meetings, you're spending more and more time with pre-referrals, you're attending school advisory council, parent partnership meetings. You're doing everything. And as a result, I would say the first hat that you wear is manager - manager/organizer. The last hat, even though it's the most important, is curriculum and children and education. You have to find that time in order to make it productive. And so you find it, but then you take home all the work. (Mary, p.3)

Joe stated that these time pressures affect not only teachers, but students as well. He noted that:

We're [in] an information age where we are flooded, but don't have enough time to sit down and talk about it with one another, talk about our principles, our ethics, it's sad. And MCAS and time on learning does not seem to recognize the importance of quality time - quality time for kids. Sometimes we have to cheat a little bit on the time to recognize children as children. (p.12)

The issue of adequate time to accomplish all the mandates of Ed. Reform was mentioned by all ten principals. Seven principals felt they were spending more time on the job between additional required meetings and added responsibilities. Two principals felt that they had always worked long hours on the job, but could see that other principals in their district were putting in more time and feeling overwhelmed. The tenth principal stated, "I refuse to let this job take over my life. At four o'clock I put on my Daddy hat and I go home" (Mark, p.6). However, he also stated that his biggest source of stress is not having enough time "to give to the numbers of people who want a piece of me" (p.8).

Principals commented that the amount of time they are spending on their jobs has made them feel overwhelmed, and added great stress to their lives. Linda stated:

At a meeting two weeks ago, principal after principal said we are drowning in Ed. Reform, we are just drowning. We can't possibly keep up the amount of time, the hours, the work, the paperwork, everything....At best, we're spending 70% of our time probably involved in administration and maybe 30% instructional leadership. And we all thought that that was ridiculous. So the time is just outrageous, the amount of time it takes. (p.4)

Four principals also mentioned that the pressures of Ed. Reform have taken away time from working with students on social and emotional issues, and from the joy of learning. Linda commented:

There's a lot of the joy that used to exist in a school, and I know our critics are going to say that's all the fluff we needed to get rid of. But there's a certain amount of joy that learning and collaboration and all of that can bring about. And there's not as much time for that. Administrators are stressed, teachers are stressed, kids are stressed, parents are stressed. Are we really achieving all that much? (p.7)

Principals also commented that the new requirements of the Ed. Reform Act had impacted the ability of staff to work effectively on important aspects of education. They stated that:

With time on learning, and curriculum frameworks, and MCAS, which create so much pressure to try to accomplish what's expected by the state, there's no more room to do anything else. The staff is so overwhelmed by trying to implement the new frameworks, that we don't have the time to spend on anything else. So for the last two years, we basically had to freeze all non-academic goals in our School Improvement Plan. (Joe, p.3)

People are surprised about what Ed. Reform is requiring in terms of time - too much change too quickly....People forget that it's people who have to implement change, not a regulation. And the human species is only capable of making so much change at once....You have an action plan, you have certain results, and then you need to have a reflection and a rest piece to assess. We never get to that, because there's another issue waiting around the corner. (John, p.1-2)

John also commented that time wasn't the only resource that effects the implementation of Ed. Reform. He stated:

Schools don't have enough resources to do everything that Ed. Reform wants. We don't have enough money, we don't have enough people. Now, given those two things, we know that everyone's going to have to do extra. The point is, there's a limit to the extras that people can do. (p.2-3)

Six principals talked about finding creative ways of scheduling in order to find the time to collaborate and implement the requirements of Ed. Reform. These included adding a half hour to the school day, adding aides to take over teacher duties in order to provide common planning time, implementing voluntary before-school study groups, having teachers choose the best time to meet as teams either before or after school or during their lunch times, and contractually adding an hour a week to the teachers' contract for collaborative team meetings.

Linda talked about "stealing time" for 45 minutes before school starts in order to have meaningful staff discussions on curriculum and instruction. She commented:

People will do this if you give them the time. But you've got to take some of the other burdens off to let them do it. And there just seems to be something wrong about the fact that you've got to do it on your own time. And I don't mind putting in time, because with ten hours a day and nights and weekends I'm putting in my time. It's a big job, and I don't mind doing it. But someone's got to recognize at least that it takes that. That it's not a 9-3 like everyone thinks. (p.10)

John summarized principals' perceptions of the impact of time on educational reform when he stated:

You go out through the...schools...you see people who are tired, distraught, and frustrated because Ed. Reform is running contrary to its purpose of improving instruction, teaching and learning, because we're spending more time with committee work, meetings, paperwork, and taking time away from kids. Ed. Reform will only succeed if people are given the time to allow it to succeed, and I'm not optimistic that's going to occur. (p.2)

Summary of Research Question #1

In summary, the following key points were made by principals regarding their perceptions of site-based management and collaboration in their schools as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform, and the effect that this has had on the time spent on their jobs:

- Principals reported they were working hard with their staffs, districts, and communities to implement the basic tenets of the Education Reform Act through shared decision-making, staff planning and discussions, district planning teams, and site-based management.
- Principals stated that the formation of School Councils has been one of the main avenues for increasing collaboration with the community.
- Many principals responded that they were already engaged in site-based management and community collaboration before the advent of Ed. Reform, but that the Ed. Reform Act had given them more power to engage teachers and the community in these processes.
- Principals also felt that the Ed. Reform Act has had some negative impacts on site-based management in their schools due to added responsibilities that take away from time better spent working with teachers and students and focusing on school improvement efforts.
- Some principals stated there were fewer opportunities for site-based management as a result of the Reform Act due to the district and state having more control over the curriculum and the pressures associated with MCAS testing.
- Principals perceived they were spending more time on their jobs as a result of the added pressures and responsibilities of the Ed. Reform Act, and many were feeling overwhelmed by the added time demands.
- Principals also stated that their staffs and students were feeling increased tension due to the added requirements and time pressures of the Reform Act.

- Principals reported that they were working to find creative ways to add time for collaboration and planning during the course of the school day.
- Principals suggested that more time for collaboration is needed, either through extending the school day or adding onto the school year in order to have the time to fully implement the requirements and intentions of the Reform Act.
- Principals stated that additional obstacles to their implementation of Ed. Reform were the teachers' union and provisions of the teachers' contract, and the continued power of the superintendent and school committee that sometimes blocked their efforts to implement reforms in their schools.

Research Question #2: Vision and Leadership

Given that the Massachusetts Education Reform Act promotes principals as leaders of change in their schools, how do elementary principals perceive their leadership and visionary roles under Education Reform?

The responses to this question showed that principals saw themselves as having a key role in implementing the Education Reform Act, and took their educational and visionary leadership responsibilities seriously. Principals were engaged in many of the leadership tasks that were reported in the literature as necessary in order to successfully restructure their schools. Principals also reported positive and negative impacts of the Education Reform Act on their leadership roles in the schools. Principal responses to the twelve Likert scale questions in this section are listed in Table 14 (page 116).

Table 14
Responses of Principals: Vision and Leadership

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	No Answer
2.1	I feel the principal has an important role in implementing Massachusetts Ed. Reform.	56 60%	36 38%	1 1%	1 1%		
		SA/A: 98%		SD/D: 2%			
2.2	I have spent time with my staff discussing the provisions and implementation of Mass. Ed. Reform.	34 36%	54 57%	6 6%			
		SA/A: 93%		SD/D: 6%			
2.3	I have spent time with my staff talking about and developing a school climate that is conducive to learning.	58 62%	36 38%				
		SA/A: 100%		SD/D:			
2.4	My school has developed a vision or philosophy statement that guides our educational decisions.	41 44%	49 52%	4 4%			
		SA/A: 96%		SD/D: 4%			
2.5	My school develops and reviews written school goals on a yearly basis.	42 45%	41 44%	10 11%		1 1%	
		SA/A: 89%		SD/D: 11%			
2.6	I have worked with my school system to develop a vision or philosophy statement that guides our educational decisions.	29 31%	47 50%	11 12%	2 2%	4 4%	1 1%
		SA/A: 81%		SD/D: 14%			
2.7	The Mass. Ed. Reform Act has given me more opportunities to use my leadership skills as a principal.	10 11%	44 47%	20 21%	14 15%	5 5%	1 1%
		SA/A: 58%		SD/D: 36%			
2.8	I am comfortable with the leadership tasks required of me as a result of the Mass. Ed. Reform Act.	11 12%	50 53%	20 21%	12 13%	1 1%	
		SA/A: 65%		SD/D: 34%			
2.9	In my role as a principal, I have helped develop leadership skills in other faculty members.	22 23%	63 67%	6 6%		3 3%	
		SA/A: 90%		SD/D: 6%			
2.10	I use knowledge of the change process to guide my efforts to implement Mass. Ed. Reform.	21 22%	67 71%	5 5%		1 1%	
		SA/A: 94%		SD/D: 5%			
2.11	I have made many changes in my building as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform.	18 19%	46 49%	24 26%	3 3%	1 1%	2 2%
		SA/A: 68%		SD/D: 29%			
2.12	If I left, the changes I've made in my school would continue.	10 11%	64 68%	4 4%	2 2%	12 13%	2 2%
		SA/A: 79%		SD/D: 6%			

An analysis of the questions on Vision and Leadership shows that the principals who responded to the survey see themselves as leaders of change, and are engaged in many of the leadership tasks that are necessary in order to bring about reforms in their individual schools. Principals saw themselves as having an important role in implementing Education Reform (98%), and have spent time discussing the provisions and implementation of the Reform Act with their staff (93%). As leaders, 100% of the principals stated they spend time with their staff developing a school climate that is conducive to learning, with 62% strongly agreeing with that statement. As visionaries, 96% of the principals have developed a vision or philosophy statement that guides the school's educational decisions, and 89% develop and review written school goals on a yearly basis.

The responses to the three questions on leadership (2.7, 2.8, 2.9) show that only 58% of the principals felt that the Education Reform Act had given them more opportunities to use their leadership skills, and only 65% were comfortable with the leadership tasks required as a result of the Reform Act. Comments from the open-ended section and the interviews indicate that many principals felt they were already visionaries and collaborative leaders before the Reform Act, and had seen little change in their leadership style. One principal stated, "A good leader does not need Ed. Reform as their visionary. I would have done all that I have without prompting" (#7).

On a positive note, 90% of the principals felt they had helped develop leadership skills in other faculty members. This is in keeping with the research that shows that principals in effectively restructured schools become "a leader of leaders" by developing

leadership skills and leadership opportunities for their staff members as part of site-based management and collaboration.

Reflecting on the change process in their schools, 94% of the principals stated they used a knowledge of the change process to guide their efforts to implement Ed. Reform. However, only 68% felt they had made changes in their building as a result of the Ed. Reform Act, stating that these changes would have taken place anyway. “Not so sure I can attribute changes to Mass. Ed. Reform. [I] feel changes are more related with professional development that may have taken place anyway without Ed. Reform” (#82).

When principals were asked whether they worked with their school system to develop a vision or philosophy statement for the district, 81% indicated agreement. It is interesting to compare this number with question 1.7 from the previous section: “I work as part of a district team to discuss and develop needed reforms in the district.” A total of 85 % of the principals agreed with that statement. It appears that in 80-85% of the districts represented in this survey, principals work together with other administrators to discuss Education Reform and develop strategies for better implementation. Since this is a necessary step in bringing about effective change, it may be helpful for the Department of Education to focus on the 15-20% of school systems that are not involved in district-wide discussions and development to see how they can be assisted in this effort.

In looking at this difference in district-wide collaborative development, an analysis was made between suburban and urban settings to see if that was a factor. The responses obtained for these two questions are listed in Table 15 (page 119).

Table 15
Responses of Principals: District Questions-Suburban vs. Urban

#	Question	Strongly Agree/Agree		Strongly Disagree/Disagree	
		Suburban	Urban	Suburban	Urban
1.7	I work as part of a district team to discuss and develop needed reforms in the district.	47/54 87%	21/27 78%	6/54 11%	4/27 15%
2.6	I have worked with my school system to develop a vision or philosophy statement that guides our educational decisions.	45/54 83%	20/27 74%	5/54 9%	5/27 19%

According to these figures, it appears that principals in urban school districts were less likely than principals in suburban districts to work collaboratively to discuss and implement reforms and visions for their school systems. Given the size of urban districts, this finding is not surprising, and may highlight one of the difficulties of implementing effective educational reforms in urban schools. As stated by Peter, an urban principal, in his interview:

In really small districts, the sort of knowledge and skills of principals are utilized more district-wide than they are in urban areas. And we haven't been asked a lot to try to solve district-wide problems or been consulting in ways that would...systematically deal with issues. Maybe it's because of the very fact of large numbers....That's changing now, and we're seeing a more significant role, not only in our buildings, but outside of our buildings, in terms of systemic issues.
(p.12)

This supposition is the focus of a restructuring effort in the Los Angeles School District that breaks down the massive school system into smaller school networks or families composed of one high school and its feeder elementary and middle schools. Funded by the Annenberg Foundation, the School Family Networks are intended to "encourage collaboration across grades, schools, and disciplines. Through such

collaboration, participants - parents and professional educators - would develop a shared commitment to making schools work for their children” (Wohlstetter & Smith, 2000, p.509).

A total of twenty-six principals added comments in the open-ended part of Section 2 that elaborated on the Likert Scale questions, as well as reflected many of the same concerns that were voiced in Section 1 on collaboration and time. On the important role of the principal in implementing Ed. Reform, one principal wrote, “We are the only ones who can” (# 46). The School Council is mentioned as playing a “big part in developing a vision for the school” (#59), and one principal stated that “Our vision statement has been central to our restructuring efforts” (#62). Six principals mentioned they were working on vision and leadership goals before the advent of the Ed. Reform Act. One principal stated, “The strengths were in place prior to ed reform” (#51).

As in Section 1, four principals mentioned time as a factor in implementing their leadership goals and visions. “My only concern with Ed. Reform and MCAS testing is that the school day doesn’t seem long enough to accomplish all the goals and learning standards to which we aspire” (#2). Three principals stated that their ability to implement changes in their school is compromised by the continued power of the school committee or district administration. Comments included, “As long as there are local school committees controlling policies and the budget, true change will not occur” (#5), and “System-wide authority dictates our job - we have little to say about decisions” (#72).

Staff issues are also cited as obstacles to bringing about change in the schools, including teacher contract issues which “get in the way of full staff participation” (#24). Two principals mentioned the difficulty of changing older teachers. One principal commented, “The most difficult aspect of the leadership under Mass. Reform is trying to move veteran teachers toward more involvement in leadership roles” (#50).

One principal summed up some of the negative affects of Ed. Reform in a lengthy comment:

Long before the current Mass. Ed. Reform Act we developed system and school goals. We’ve been working on building and fine-tuning our school climate for over 20 years. The morale, until the past 2 years, had never been higher. The parents are very supportive. But the teacher bashing and unrelenting pressure on teachers and principals is taking a toll. Ed. Reform is turning into oppression of students and staff. (#77)

Comments from the interviews expanded on principals’ perceptions of their leadership and visionary roles under Massachusetts Education Reform, finding both positive and negative impacts on their jobs. Principals also elaborated on information on leadership roles and styles from the demographic section of the questionnaire. As Mary stated, “[leadership] style has everything to do with whether that reform is going to move” (p.14).

All ten principals commented on how they view themselves as leaders, and how their leadership style has impacted the implementation of Ed. Reform in their schools. Principals commented on their roles as managers “to make the school run smoothly so teachers can teach” (Betsy, p.4). Kathy stated, “I see my role really as someone who tries to make things work...when a problem comes up, how are we going to make this

work so it's what's best for the kids without making any of the teachers mental over it"

(p.5). In her interview, Linda commented that her leadership style was one of "informed consensus, with the right to be the ultimate decision maker" (p.2). She stated that:

It's not a democracy, and I had to tell the teachers that early on....I do feel that there are certain things that I've been trained for, certain experiences that I have that are different....There are cases...where just the things I have to deal with every day give me an insight that they don't necessarily have. And sometimes you have to be the person who will make an ultimate decision. And I know that's unpopular, but, to be a good leader, I think you have to have the troops behind you most of the time, and if they're in agreement, it's that much easier. (p.2)

Principals highlighted their role as instructional leaders for teachers, commenting on the importance of providing curriculum information, resources, and high academic expectations. Joe stated, "I believe it's important to have a leader to help the group manage their resources, their time, and to keep focus on what they have identified as important educational goals" (p.5). Peter commented on Ed. Reform, "I think it's put more of an emphasis on being an educational leader rather than the administrator of the building....Now we own it...to be really clear about curriculum, and having a strong curriculum in place, and having it articulated" (p.5-6). Mary summarized this leadership role well in her interview:

I think my role is, read as much as I can as far as curriculum is concerned. I copy things...put them in mailboxes....I try to give them all the resources that they need. I tell them they also need to say to me what their wishes are and their desires, and where they're stuck so I can help out. And, I actually feel that the teachers have begun to believe that I am their instructional leader....If I didn't do that role, I don't care how much managing I do, the children's education would not reach the expectations you want. (p.4)

Principals also spoke of their role as "leaders of leaders", especially in the area of instructional leadership. Joe stated, "I don't view the principal as the sole academic

leader in the school. [I don't know] one person who has the time, who has the knowledge, to be an expert in every single area. This is expected at the elementary level"

(p.4). John felt that the added responsibilities of Ed. Reform had impacted on his role as an instructional leader. He claimed:

I'm no longer an educational leader. I am an educational leader of instructional leaders. My teachers are the educational, instructional leaders of our building....I have been given too many other managerial responsibilities....We've been assigned as CEO's, managers....I'm a leader of instructional leaders. My teachers are the instructional leaders of this school. As they should be. (p.3)

Principals also commented positively on their roles as change agents and models for risk-taking, necessary leaderships tasks in bringing about educational reform. Bob stated, "I see myself as a change agent, and the main thing I try to change is teachers...to lead them, direct them to workshops, course work...to get them to do something different where it seemed necessary" (p.5). Mark explained that "what I've truly done is empower teachers to get out of the envelope, to try some things, doesn't matter if it doesn't make it, we'll learn from that as well" (p.11). Kathy stated that "teachers wanted to change, but never had anyone that said it's okay, go ahead....I think that was what I really helped to have happen here" (p.7).

Peter noted that you have to have a "certain kind of political savvy" (p.6) in order to take risks, stating that "schools and school systems are incredibly political....You could only take risks if you know you're going to be supported if you fail" (p.6). He claimed that this type of innovative leadership was the original intent of Massachusetts Education Reform, but that this intent has changed since 1993. He stated that:

It's been clear to me from the beginning that I had to be a fairly good politician to make this school work and keep working well. And again I think that's the spirit of reform education. That certainly, when the legislators were talking about this they were talking about encouraging educational entrepreneurs. You know, encouraging sort of rebellious kind of people to be leaders. I mean, those words were clearly used back in the 80's and early 90's. Now that's not being talked about at all, and you want people to fall into line. (p.8)

An interesting leadership role that was discussed by six out of ten principals was as an advocate for students, teachers, and the school. This role is not widely discussed in the literature, but was important to principals, especially as they talked about the negative publicity surrounding the implementation of Ed. Reform. Bob talked about being an advocate for kids and providing support for families and children. Emily remarked that, when she was hired, her school needed a leader who would validate the teachers. She stated:

The teachers here are very needy. They're excellent people - excellent, dedicated, hard-working people. They need to be validated....They need to know that they're doing right by the children because all they hear are the "you're not doing this for my child" from the parents. (p.7)

Betsy talked about being an advocate for her school, "whether it's staffing, additional classrooms, materials, whatever the issue is. I think that's probably been my greatest accomplishment here, that I am a true advocate for the population we have here" (p.4). Mark commented that:

We need to be proud of what we do, we need to scream it from the rooftop, come on down and see what's happening here....And they [staff] were skeptical at first, but as we get more and more rave reviews around town, they understand how that works. And when the time comes to ask for something, there's a reason to get it. (p.12-13)

This advocacy role was further extended by principals to describe the need to be a “people person” in order to be truly effective as a leader. John felt that the demands of the Education Reform Act have had a negative impact on this personal side of education reform. He remarked:

Principals need to provide teachers with a sense of being important, being valued. The human piece, the personal piece, is what’s diminished through Ed. Reform. Because of rules, regulations, reports, committee meetings, demands, none of which carry the significance as the interaction of people, whether it’s children and teachers, teachers and principals, principals and superintendents, superintendents and school committees. It’s a people business, folks. And we’re only going to succeed by the way people interact with one another, have common goals, and work together to improve teaching and learning. (p.4)

Mary commented on this “human” side of a principal’s leadership role as the most important aspect of a complex job. She stated:

I think the principal’s role is really important, and if the principal understands that role is not just what’s in your contract, but that you have to be available for parents, for children, for teachers, for paraprofessionals, for central office, whatever. But if you can internally mesh all of that so that there is a slot to put each one in, and that somehow they do relate, then it can be a wonderful job. And I would just say that if anybody doesn’t see it that way, then they shouldn’t be a principal because you are a mediator, a facilitator, a manager, as well as an educational leader, and all those other things. But I think primarily, if you’re not a people person, and you can’t see beyond your opinion, then you don’t step foot in the principal’s office. (p.12)

The principal interviews also explored the role of a principal as a visionary leader, and the impact that Ed. Reform has had on that part of the job. Principals saw both positive and negative results of the Education Reform Act. Mary stated that a “vision is what keeps you going, and without a vision I’d become very stale - I think the whole school would become stale without that vision” (p.6). She felt that the Education Reform

Act had helped her "because it's given me that management piece that's mine" (p.6-7).

However, she cautioned about obstacles to implementing that vision, stating:

Would a vision help if you had a staff that didn't follow it, or if you had a superintendent who put blinders on it and stopped it along the way? I'd still be a visionary, but boy I'd be plugging. But I think Ed. Reform has given me the leeway. (p.7)

Joe stated that principals need to have a vision, not only of the big picture, but also of the details that go into implementing a vision. He stated:

We have a fragmentation of where we're going, and not the time to meet together and work out the intricacies of implementing these plans. And that's often neglected by so-called school reformers and great idea people. You have to have, not only a vision of the forest, but the trees and branches....And you have to have an awareness of details. Big ideas alone will never get much below the surface of the sea without the knowledge of the details and attention to them - to make all the things come together, to make those work. (p.11)

Linda also mentioned the negative aspects of Ed. Reform on the visionary role of a school principal. She claimed:

If a principal doesn't have some sense of vision...his or her school's going to stagnate pretty fast. And Ed. Reform might have helped a little bit in that, in defining the vision in some respects for us. But I think what's happened is our vision is now tempered by the demands, the expectations, the legislation. So there are some places where I'd like to go off in a particular way, and I feel hampered by what I have to do to meet the demands of Ed. Reform, so yeah, I think it's made a difference, not all of it positive. (p.5)

Principals commented on other positive and negative aspects of the Ed. Reform Act and its impact on the leadership role of principals. On the positive side, Bob commented that he saw Ed. Reform driving out the "old boy network" of "autocratic and dictatorial" principals in favor of principals who are younger and more diverse (p.9). John claimed that Ed. Reform has provided the impetus for mandated changes in the

schools. Mark stated that teachers are more willing to work with him because of the demands of Ed. Reform, and the threat of bad press if they don't work together to improve curriculum and instruction.

On the negative side, principals commented on the multiple demands placed on them by Education Reform, and the difficulty of implementing all of them. Emily stated that, "I feel like a little inchworm...because every time I move ahead, I get buffeted back by some other thing that has more immediacy" (p.3). John remarked that many of the clerical tasks assigned to him through Education Reform "have nothing to do with educational leadership. They're time wasters. They're time consumers" (p.7). When asked about the leadership tasks required as a result of the Ed. Reform Act, Linda replied:

They're unreasonable. There's too much, too fast, without the help. Nothing was taken off our plates when Ed. Reform came in. Nothing. More and more and more was put on our plates. I don't mind doing it, the tasks, many of them have value, but something's gotta give. You can't keep piling the plate over and over and over again without taking something off. (p.11)

Other negative aspects of Ed. Reform were noted by principals. Peter commented that "the thing that didn't happen under Ed. Reform was people just automatically expected principals...[to] become a different kind of a leader and without any kind of different training and/or different support structure put into place " (p.6). Bob stated that he was uncomfortable with the accountability of the many tasks he was responsible for, and felt he was always looking over his shoulder for the superintendent.

Four principals noted that the Ed. Reform Act had impacted negatively on the stability of the principal's job. Linda remarked that:

I don't know where our replacements are coming from in a few years. I have one staff member on the staff here out of 35 staff members who is aspiring to be a principal. No one else wants to touch it....And I hear that echoed across the entire state. People don't want anything to do with it. (p.11)

Betsy was in the process of moving to a new job, partly because her assistant principal was making more money for fewer hours and less responsibility. She stated, "They've re-posted this [job] twice. People are not attracted to the principal's position....[My assistant] would have to take a pay cut to take on the added responsibility of the principalship....No one is coming from the ranks to be a principal"

(p.2). John reported that:

If you don't have stability in your leadership at the top, then [you'll] have a very slow process of change and improvement. There must be experience and stability of leadership....The number of principals who are getting out through reaching retirement age or being pushed out through the additional responsibilities and pressures of the position, there's [a] void at the building level. (p.7)

Emily claimed that the Ed. Reform Act was "probably the best thing that's happened to me in that it will force me to do something else. And this is okay....I feel that I'm still young enough to do it. And that's probably what's going to happen" (p.10).

The National Association of Elementary School Principals and National Association of Secondary School Principals reported a similar finding from a study they commissioned that looked at the problem of a shortage of qualified candidates to fill the many principal vacancies. Their research concluded that the top three barriers to acquiring sufficient quantity and quality of principals were insufficient compensation when compared with responsibilities, the job's high stress levels, and the amount of time required by the job (Educational Research Service, 2000, p.26).

This finding correlates with survey results from the Massachusetts Elementary School Principal's Association from 1998 which looked at the turnover rate of principals since the implementation of the Ed. Reform Act. Their report stated:

The high turnover of principals since 1993, either through voluntary or non-voluntary reasons, points to a severe crisis of leadership in the schools of the Commonwealth. As research points to the key role of the principal in the success of a school, this amount of turnover in the principalship causes great concern about the sustainability of leadership, consistency of programs and the effect on the education of children. (MESPA, p.2)

Summary of Research Question #2

In summary, the following key points were made by principals regarding the impact of the Education Reform Act on their leadership and visionary roles:

- Principals reported that they are engaged in many of the leadership tasks cited in the literature as necessary in order to effectively restructure schools. These tasks include:
 - discussing provisions and implementation of the Reform Act with their staff;
 - working with their staff to develop a school climate that is conducive to learning;
 - developing a vision or philosophy statement that guides the school's educational decisions;
 - developing and reviewing written school goals on a yearly basis;
 - developing leadership skills in other faculty members;
 - using knowledge of the change process to guide their reform efforts.
- Principals reported that they would have been involved in many of these tasks regardless of the Education Reform Act.
- Principals in urban settings appear to be less involved in vision-setting and reform discussions with their districts than principals in suburban settings, possibly due to the large size of their school systems.

- Principals reported that obstacles to their leadership roles in reform efforts include too many tasks and not enough time, continued power of the school committee or district administration, teacher contracts, and resistance from veteran teachers to change efforts.
- Principals reported that their leadership styles and roles have positively impacted the implementation of Education Reform in their schools. Principals commented on their roles as visionaries, managers, instructional leaders, “leaders of leaders,” change agents, models for risk-taking, and politicians. These roles are described in the literature as being important to the implementation of effective school reform.
- Principals described one of their leadership roles as being an advocate for their students, staff, and schools. They stated this was especially important in view of the negative publicity generated by the Education Reform Act towards teachers and public schools. This advocacy role is not widely discussed in the literature, and is an area for further study.
- Principals reported on the need to be a “people person” in order to be effective as a leader, and felt that this role had been diminished by the demands and time constraints of Ed. Reform.
- Principals described the importance of their role as visionary leaders in their schools, and felt that the Education Reform Act has had both positive and negative impacts on this aspect of their jobs. While principals reported that Ed. Reform had given them the leeway and power to involve staff in implementing a vision, they also stated that the demands and controls of the Ed. Reform Act had hampered this vision-setting process.
- Principals described some of the obstacles to implementing a school vision as reluctant staff, controlling superintendents, lack of time, and fragmentation of efforts due to the many demands of the Education Reform Act.

- Principals reported on other positive impacts of the Education Reform Act on their leadership and visionary roles, including the diminishing of the “old boy” network of more autocratic principals, providing the impetus for mandated changes in their schools, and increased willingness of teachers to work with principals to implement necessary changes.
- Principals also commented on negative impacts of the Education Reform Act on their leadership and visionary roles. Principals reported that increased demands on their time and the addition of meaningless clerical tasks effected their ability to work with staff on important reform issues. They also stated that principals were expected to change their leadership styles without adequate training or support.
- Principals also commented on the negative impact on their job stability as a result of Ed. Reform, the lack of candidates interested in the principalship because of the increased demands of the job, and the effect this leadership crisis will have on the state’s efforts to reform schools and bring about meaningful change.

Research Question #3: Massachusetts Education Reform Provisions

Given that the Massachusetts Education Reform Act changed many of the working conditions of principals, how do elementary principals in Massachusetts perceive these changes as they relate to their job performance?

The responses to this question show that principals felt the changes in their working conditions as a result of the Ed. Reform Act had had both positive and negative impacts on their jobs. While the intent of the Ed. Reform Act was to increase principals’ control over the budget process and the hiring and firing of staff, principals report that this hasn’t happened. The loss of collective bargaining rights and changes in contract provisions have also impacted negatively on the principal’s job. On a positive note, principals state that School Councils and School Improvement Plans appear to be

improving some aspects of instruction and learning in the schools. Principal responses to the twelve Likert Scale questions in this section are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16
Responses of Principals: Massachusetts Education Reform Provisions

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	No Answer
3.1	I am familiar with the statutes and provisions of Mass. Ed. Reform as they relate to my job as a principal.	35 37%	58 62%				1 1%
		SA/A: 99%		SD/D:			
3.2	My School Council has been an ally in establishing goals for my school.	39 41%	47 50%	6 6%	2 2%		
		SA/A: 91%		SD/D: 9%			
3.3	My School Council has helped me improve the quality of instruction in my school.	10 11%	47 50%	31 33%	3 3%	3 3%	
		SA/A: 61%		SD/D: 36%			
3.4	The School Council has helped me secure additional funding and/or resources for my school.	14 15%	31 33%	36 38%	11 12%	2 2%	
		SA/A: 48%		SD/D: 50%			
3.5	School Improvement Plans have helped me improve the quality of learning in my school.	15 16%	57 61%	18 19%	2 2%	2 2%	
		SA/A: 77%		SD/D: 21%			
3.6	The Mass. Ed. Reform Act has increased the budget for my school.	10 11%	30 32%	27 29%	23 24%	4 4%	
		SA/A: 43%		SD/D: 53%			
3.7	I have more control over my school budget as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform.	6 6%	18 19%	32 34%	30 32%	7 7%	1 1%
		SA/A: 26%		SD/D: 66%			
3.8	The Mass. Ed. Reform Act has given me more power to hire and fire staff in my building.	7 7%	21 22%	39 41%	24 26%	2 2%	1 1%
		SA/A: 30%		SD/D: 67%			
3.9	My superintendent has negotiated a fair written contract with me.	12 13%	35 37%	26 28%	18 19%	1 1%	2 2%
		SA/A: 50%		SD/D: 47%			
3.10	I receive a written evaluation from my superintendent every year.	19 20%	34 36%	23 24%	12 13%	4 4%	2 2%
		SA/A: 56%		SD/D: 37%			
3.11	The evaluations I receive from my superintendent help me improve my skills and abilities as a principal.	9 10%	30 32%	25 27%	18 19%	9 10%	3 3%
		SA/A: 41%		SD/D: 46%			
3.12	The loss of collective bargaining rights and tenure has made me feel less secure in my job.	48 51%	22 23%	15 16%	5 5%	2 2%	2 2%
		SA/A: 74%		SD/D: 21%			

An analysis of the questions shows that principals stated they are familiar with the provisions of the Mass. Ed. Reform Act (99%), which is important since they are the ones implementing it in their schools. Principals report that the creation of School Councils at each school has helped them to establish goals for the school (91%). However, only 61% of the principals reported that School Councils had improved the quality of instruction in the school, and only 48% stated that the Councils had helped secure additional funding and/or resources.

These results are in accord with concerns over the advisory role of the Councils, and the lack of clearly defined roles for them. Comments from this section state that the Councils tend to focus more on climate and management issues, rather than classroom instruction. Principals also reported an overlap between the role of the School Councils and the more active and involved Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO's). One principal voiced a concern about the reasons that parents may have for joining the Council: "The school site council provision is a nightmare and a waste of my time. Parents with a grudge have found a way to further their own agendas!" (#85).

The School Improvement Plans that are written by the principal and the School Council are reported to improve the quality of learning in the school by 77% of the respondents. Principals stated that the plans were a "valuable tool in school-wide goal setting (#42)," but also felt that "there is so much emphasis on form rather than substance that they at times impede progress (#77)."

The MESPA Principal's Survey found similar results. They reported that 65% of the principals felt strongly that the School Council was an ally in establishing the needs

for their schools. Interestingly, only 30% felt strongly that the school committee respected the work of the School Councils and had been responsive to Council recommendations.

One of the major areas that was targeted by the Ed. Reform Act was the budget process. Under the foundation funding formula, schools were to receive an equitable amount of money, especially targeting schools in poorer communities. Principals were also to be given greater control over their school budgets, in keeping with the business model of site-based management and authority. On the survey, only 43% of the principals reported that the Mass. Ed. Reform Act had increased the budget for their school, and only 26% indicated that they now had more control over their budgets, with 32% feeling strongly that they did not have more control. On the MESPA principal survey, only 13% felt strongly that they had greater budget control than before.

Some principals commented that funding to their districts had decreased under Ed. Reform, with one principal stating that the percentage of the district budget funded by the state had decreased from 38% to 7-8% (#77). Another principal stated, "Real money to my district has decreased while obligations to areas like staff training have increased. It is impossible to do everything for all people with the funds received" (#24).

In talking about control, principals stated that the budget was still mainly controlled by the central office. As reported by one principal, "Budget is still largely out [of] my control due to high % of non-discretionary items and insufficient support from town and state" (#42). On a positive note, one respondent stated that the budget control at the principals' level had helped to earmark funds in needed areas and had stopped

wasteful spending (#50). The MESPA survey reported that only 13% of the principals felt strongly that they had greater budget control under Ed. Reform.

Another area of greater authority that was targeted for principals under Ed. Reform was hiring and firing of staff. On the questionnaire, only 30% reported that the Ed. Reform Act had given them more power to hire and fire staff in their buildings. While some principals stated that they had this authority before Ed. Reform, others stated the Reform Act had not been effective in granting them this power if the superintendent didn't relinquish this control. As stated by one principal, "All we are now are political pawns. We are told who to hire. Things are more political than ever" (#54). The MESPA Principal Survey concurred with these findings, reporting that only 21% of the respondents felt strongly that the principals' hiring and firing authority had been strengthened under the new law. "Only 19% felt strongly that they [had] the discretion to approve or deny district transfers to their schools in the same manner as an initial hire" (MESPA, p.7).

A major change for principals under the Mass. Ed. Reform Act was the loss of collective bargaining rights and tenure. This also effected principals' contracts, as they now needed to negotiate individually with the superintendent. As stated in the MESPA survey, "It is believed that among the reasons collective bargaining for principals was lost was the opportunity to give districts the right to hire principals on individual terms" (p.3). On the questionnaire for this current study, only 50% of the respondents reported that the superintendent had negotiated a fair written contract with them. Only 56% of the principals reported that they received a written evaluation from their superintendent

every year, and just 41% reported that these evaluations helped them improve their skills and abilities as a principal. Five principals commented that their contract was a “take it or leave it” process, with no negotiations. One principal reported, “Principals are out on a limb on their own...lost sick leave bank, union benefits, seniority, longevity” (#63).

Another principal stated:

Contracts are not negotiated and if they were the principal would not have “leverage” to gain a fair contract. Every other member of my faculty is more secure in their position than I am. However, the principal bears the most responsibility. (#5)

On the subject of evaluations, some principals reported that their job performance was discussed with the superintendent, but not often put in writing. When it was written, principals stated that they were responsible for pulling the information together for the superintendent, with little or no direct observation. One principal reported, “I have to do all the work and provide 40-50 pages of written evidence” (#77). One principal felt that the evaluation process had become more positive, stating, “My two previous superintendents did not evaluate me formally. My current superintendent will. The process has begun, but has not been completed” (#30).

Responding to question 3.12, “The loss of collective bargaining rights and tenure has made me feel less secure in my job,” 74% of the principals agreed with this statement, with 51% strongly agreeing with it. Six principals added comments that indicated the negative impact this has had on their jobs. As reported by one principal, “This job is nothing without collective bargaining. Ed. Reform has totally emasculated the position of principal. We are at the superintendent’s mercy or lack of” (#54). Other comments

included the concern that principals have less security than those they supervise, while bearing the brunt of the responsibility for implementing Ed. Reform. One principal did state agreement with this aspect of the Ed. Reform Act, stating, "I'm not interested in tenure and feel I need to earn my contract annually or change fields" (#42).

The MESPA Principal Survey reported very similar findings, noting the negative effect this issue has had on the change process that is the focus of the Education Reform Act:

While progress has been noted in that most principals have written contracts, over 40% have a term less than three years in duration. This is a setback for the innovative spirit we are called on to demonstrate and the stability required to effect change. More disturbing is the 47% of respondents who were not involved in contract negotiations with their superintendents. We are pleased to report that most principals are receiving written evaluations of their work, but over 40% had no role in formulating performance standards with their superintendents. (MESPA, 1998, p.3)

The principal interviews gave further insights into the impact of the provisions of the Ed. Reform Act on the schools. On the topic of School Councils and School Improvement Plans, all ten principals commented on the ineffectiveness of the Councils to bring about meaningful change in their schools. They reported that the Councils had no power, no funding, and no budgetary authority, which greatly limited their ability to implement new programs. As reported by Peter:

I think the hopes around the School Councils have been somewhat fulfilled, but yet not entirely, because as far as I can see from sort of talking to people around, they lack a lot of power and authority, and when you don't have budgetary control, you can't implement very many plans. (p.1)

Emily reported that on the West Coast, School Councils are given a budget. She stated, "A budget empowers people. If you have money, you can move on that premise" (p.11).

As documented earlier by the MESPA survey, one of the frustrations reported by principals was the continuing power of school committees, which limited the authority of the School Councils. Bob stated, "Last year, School Council did a survey and wrote up a School Improvement Plan and school committee spent two meetings picking at it, and detail crap, and never approved it" (p.14)

Principals also reported a redundancy with the already established Parent Teacher Organizations, and confusion over differentiating the roles of the two similar groups. Bob also reported difficulty in finding parent representatives to serve on his School Council, and stated his School Council was "dysfunctional." He commented, "If I had my choice, I'd just eliminate my School Council...talk about risk-taking!" (p.14).

While principals reported that the Councils had been effective in helping to set goals for the school, they felt that these were goals they would have set for the schools even without the Councils. As reported by Linda, "One of the frustrations we have with our School Council is coming up with goals because there's very little that we wouldn't have done anyway" (p.1). Principals also stated that many of the goals that the Councils chose to work on were not related to curriculum or improvement of instruction, dealing instead with topics such as playgrounds, security, and school beautification. Mary commented, "Once we've got all the nitty-gritty things out of the way, and we had to get to substance, I found that the Council [was] at a standstill. The principals felt they were just having meetings because it was the law. We weren't being productive" (p.3). The Department of Education also noted this issue with School Councils, requiring School Improvement Plans written by the Councils starting with the 1999-2000 school year to

be focused directly on the improvement of student learning. Joe reported, "It was interesting, in one of the recommendations from [State Commissioner of Education] Driscoll, which came out this spring [1999], he strongly urged School Councils to focus just on the academics in their School Improvement Plans. Which is a recognition of reality" (p.3).

Principals also talked about the extra workload put on them by the Councils, stating that they are responsible for organizing the Councils, training members, running and documenting the meetings, coming up with the goals, writing the School Improvement Plan, presenting the plans to school committee, and following up with the activities to make sure they're accomplished. As stated by Betsy:

The site council is more of a rubber stamp on things than really involved....We elect a site council every year, we run the budget past them, we try to write School Improvement Plans together, but the reality of it is that I end up writing them. It's a nice idea that everyone would write them. It hasn't worked out for me in six years, and it's not that I don't want to give up control of it. It's just not do-able. (p.2)

Principals did report some positive accomplishments of their School Councils, especially in the areas of communication, goal-setting, and program development. Emily's School Council started a pilot program in World Languages and implemented a "timely safety policy" (p.2). Mary stated, "You have the parent reporting to parents, and you have the teachers reporting to the staff....We just did a science night, and it came from the Council to better explain to the parents our curriculum" (p.15). Mary also reported that, after the four elementary School Councils in her district realized they weren't being productive, they combined their forces, held joint study meetings, and

produced a strategic plan for the next three years that focused on content and curriculum.

As she reported:

Without the initiative of saying where do we go, we would still be shuffling and meeting and doing nothing. So I think it's wonderful the Councils have been created because most people don't start them unless they're told they have to. But I think in the end, they realize they really are a very good piece, they really are there to help the school grow. So, it has turned out to be something productive. (p.4)

Principals also reported a positive aspect of goal-setting and School Improvement Plans was focusing the school's efforts and controlling the outside agendas of parents and staff. Emily claimed that "if it's not in the Plan, I don't want them looking at it" (p.2).

John stated:

A positive piece for me is School Improvement Plans, because that's goal-setting, and how you're going to focus, and that provides an opportunity where you can deter parents and sometimes staff about getting into other things. You can say, wait a minute, these are the goals this year. We're not adding any new ones. (p.11)

Another topic that was discussed by principals was the issue of budgets - both funding and control. Principals felt that urban schools had benefited from the change in the funding formula, but that other areas of the state, particularly the Cape and Western Massachusetts, had seen no change or even decreases in their funding. Betsy stated that Ed. Reform had given her urban community more money and the ability to improve programs. However, she was amazed that the suburban community in which she lived had not received the same opportunities such as money for cultural arts programs. Peter reported that his urban school had received additional funds from Ed. Reform, but not as much as anticipated, and not back to the levels he felt he had before Proposition 21/2. He

stated that school districts were seeing an increase in funding from out of the tax base and from grants.

Both Bob, from Western Massachusetts, and Joe, from the Cape, stated that their funding had decreased because the funding formula was based on property wealth and not median income. Joe reported that the per pupil support from the state had decreased in twenty years from \$1800-\$2000 per pupil to \$550 per student. He commented that "there is no recognition of the median income in determining how that formula is based. It's only on property wealth. The majority of people who live and work on the Cape are well below the state median income" (p.2). Bob reported similar issues with rural poverty in the Western part of the state, with a high per capita tax base because of the large amount of property owned by summer tourists and winter skiers. However, the local population has a very low per capita income. He stated, "There's been no improvement, zero, period, if anything, worse in my view, and that is the one major significant piece that has to be dealt with in order to change schools" (p.2).

In looking at the issue of funding for urban vs. suburban vs. rural, it's interesting to break down the question from the survey by the three locations. The data in Table 17 (p.142) emerges from question 3.6, "The Mass. Ed. Reform Act has increased the budget for my school." Although the number of responses for some of the locations are small, limiting the accuracy of the data, the general trend appears to support the contention that urban schools have benefited from Ed. Reform funding more than suburban or rural schools. Fifty-six percent of urban schools reported an increase in funding, compared to only 41% of suburban and 25% of rural schools.

Table 17
Responses of Principals: Budget Increases by Location

	Str. Agree/ Agree	Str. Disagree/ Disagree	Don't Know
Urban	15 56%	11 41%	1 3%
Suburban	22 41%	29 54%	3 6%
Rural	3 25%	9 75%	
No designation		1 100%	

Other interesting points about funding were raised by Kathy and Mark. Kathy stated that the imbalance between spending at the high school versus the elementary level continued to exist in her town because of local priorities. She commented that “the funding formula proposed in the original Ed. Reform Act should have made a difference to the elementary program here...but, because this town really feels this pride in the high school...the imbalance has still continued to be the same thing” (p.2). Kathy also commented, “I still see the wealthier towns having the higher school budgets” (p.9). Mark’s concern was the amount of money that the state was spending on Ed. Reform, to the detriment of programs in local schools. He stated:

I get a little crazed when I go to the DOE [Department of Education] conferences and hear that they’ve spent \$32,000,000 on the MCAS test...and their conclusion at the end of the first year was that kids from wealthy communities tend to do better on these tests than inner city kids. \$32 million! And all I wanted was ten grand to create a science center. (p.5)

On the issue of control of the budget, another promise of the Education Reform Act, Mary commented that she now had discretionary control over six line items dealing

with professional development and instructional supplies because of Ed. Reform.

However, other principals reported that they had seen almost no change in the process.

John stated that he'd always had control over his budget for instructional materials and supplies. Linda commented that the superintendent had always supported the building-based school budgets in her district, and didn't see a change under Ed. Reform. Kathy commented, "The promise was that we would be managing our money, and we're not.

And I think that would be a huge difference" (p.17). On the issue of budget control, Peter stated:

Within the next 3-4 years we're going to have most of the control over our budget at the school level, to the point where we'll be given a sum of money and then we'll be allowed to determine how money is going to be used within the school....That's both a blessing and a curse! (p.19)

Mark summarized the change in the budget process under Education Reform when he commented:

Writing a budget has become very difficult because with Ed. Reform we don't write budgets anymore, we write goals and an agenda to get to that goal. And how are we going to assess that goal. And how are you going to pay to get there to begin with. There's no more resources than there ever were under Ed. Reform. Just a lot more pressure. (p.6)

On the issue of having more power to hire and fire teachers under Ed. Reform, principals reported some differences in their hiring power, but no differences in their ability to fire incompetent staff. Principals stated that they were able to recommend candidates to the superintendent, who in most cases would approve the recommendation. However, this hiring authority was present in many districts before Ed. Reform, so there was little change in this process. Mark commented, "This bullshit about telling the press

and the rest of the world that principals had now been made powerful, that we would make the decisions about hiring and firing...certainly isn't true for me. I make those decisions based on whether or not the superintendent accepts them" (p.6). Kathy did report a positive change in her hiring authority since the advent of Ed. Reform that has helped her build a quality staff. She stated:

Before Ed. Reform, I would do the interviewing, I would bring candidates to the superintendent, and the final decision got made between the superintendent and the school committee. And now it's me. And I surround myself with teachers I trust. I don't do individual interviews or anything like that. There's always a consensus built somewhere. But for me here, that has really been different. (p.17)

Principals reported no change in their ability to fire incompetent staff with professional status (the equivalent of tenure under Ed. Reform), largely due to the power of the teachers' union. Betsy commented, "One thing...I don't believe worked at all was getting rid of tenure. That is a farce, because now we have professional status and non-professional status, and the purpose of weeding out teachers who shouldn't be in a classroom doesn't work, with due process and everything else" (p.1). Bob claimed that he urged poor teachers to retire or assigned them to "positions where they do the least damage" (p.3) because he doesn't have the power to fire them and the state doesn't want to tackle the issue because of union pressure. He commented that lack of power to fire staff was a major impediment to change. Other obstacles to firing incompetent teachers were fear of litigation and no lay-off clauses in teacher contracts. Mary summarized the frustrations of the firing process when she commented:

You have to go through so many steps, and so much documentation, and it's like you're never getting your head above water because it's arbitration, it's a hearing,

it's this and that, and so you're three years down the road and the teacher's still there and the kids still aren't learning. (p.16)

While teachers have maintained their union protection under the Ed. Reform Act, principals lost their tenure, their right to belong to a union, and their right to bargain collectively. In their interviews, principals reported many of the same impacts as on the questionnaire - a "take-it or leave-it" stance on contracts, lack of written evaluations, loss of benefits such as vacation time, loss of salary compensation for years of service and step raises, and feelings of insecurity. A big concern for principals that impacted the implementation of effective reforms was the loss of protection, while giving principals more responsibility and asking them to take more risks. Joe commented that "Before reform...we did have legal rights....I think what worries me now more than anything else is the fact that we are so overwhelmed we can't do everything. And therefore, we are even at greater risk of lawsuit than we were before" (p.8). Linda stated:

It's much harder to take a risk if you have very little security in doing so. That's one of the things I can't figure out. They've made the principal the innovator, the leader, the person responsible, the biggest risk-taker, and they've kind of cut the ground out from under you though, as far as keeping any kind of protection. I also think that it's very difficult when you have people who have union protection, who are actually on the most forefront of delivering instruction, and your job is to oversee them and guide them in that, and yet you have less protection than they do. (p.5)

Two principals commented that this discrepancy in union protection between teachers and principals should be equalized, either maintaining unions for both groups, or eliminating it for both. Linda commented, "I don't think it's necessarily that we should have more protection, but rather I think it should be equal. The people we're supervising should be equal to us" (p.5). Betsy stated:

My own personal opinion is that unions don't belong in the teaching profession. We should all be professionals....So, from that regard, unions don't belong in the principals' arena either. However, if they're going to have unions in every other aspect of education, it's a little bit unfair that we don't. (p.2)

Principals reported the loss of collective bargaining led to feelings of competition and isolation, discrepancies in salaries between principals in a district, and differences between principals and other administrators. Kathy reported, "There is a vast discrepancy between the other administrator's salaries and mine. And I have no way to address it" (p.8). Mark commented:

It seems to me since Ed. Reform happened there is no negotiating going on. It made the superintendents all powerful, and they throw out bones to those of us that are doing pretty well. I certainly have lost all bargaining power without being part of a unit. And that's turned the principals against each other. (p.7)

Principals were concerned that they served at the whim of the superintendent, and could be fired without proper cause. When a new superintendent came into the district, their position was even more tenuous. Mary commented that this feeling of "standing out there alone" (p.7) made it difficult to attract new people to the position of principal. Peter stated, "I am distressed by the loss of the bargaining power, because individual principals have no power in relationship to the superintendent and the school committee...and we can be dismissed at will" (p.9) Mary summarized the concerns of many principals when she stated:

I feel there is an element of insecurity in this position. And I wish Ed. Reform would look at that and that, Yes, they are managers, but that doesn't mean that they shouldn't have the rights of everyone else. And I think we should all have an evaluation tool, and we should all have a contract, and we should be able to feel that no one's going to lock the door in the morning and we can't get back in. And that can happen! (p.7)

Summary of Research Question #3

In summary, the following key points were made by principals regarding the impact of key provisions of the Education Reform Act that changed their working conditions:

- Principals reported that the creation of School Councils has had both positive and negative impacts on the role of the principal and the implementation of effective reforms:
 - Principals felt that School Councils have helped them establish goals for the school and communicate more effectively with the larger community.
 - Principals reported that School Councils have helped them implement some specific programs in the schools.
 - Principals stated that School Councils have had a moderate effect in improving the quality of instruction in the school, and even less effect in securing additional funding and/or resources.
 - Principals felt that there was a lack of clearly defined roles for School Councils, and an overlap with the role of the already established Parent Teacher Organizations.
 - Principals reported that the advisory role of School Councils, and their lack of power, funding, and budgetary control, impacted on the effectiveness of the Councils to bring about meaningful change in the schools.
 - Principals reported that school committees didn't always support the work of the School Councils, especially as it related to the approval of the School Improvement Plan.
 - Principals stated that the establishment of school goals in the School Improvement Plan helped focus the school's improvement efforts, and also helped control the separate agendas of parents and staff.

- Principals reported an increased workload due to the demands of organizing the Councils and implementing the many tasks associated with them.
- In the area of budgets, most principals reported that they hadn't received additional funding as proposed under the Education Reform Act. While principals in urban schools reported some increase in funding, rural schools in Western Massachusetts and schools on the Cape in particular reported a decrease in funding.
- Only one-fourth of the principals surveyed reported they had more control over their budgets as a result of Ed. Reform, citing continuing control by the central office and the school committee.
- Some principals did report increased control of their budgets, with more authority over the total budget or specific line items in the budget that improved instructional support and reduced wasteful spending.
- Principals were concerned about the amount of money that the state was spending on Ed. Reform for programs such as the MCAS testing, to the possible detriment of money going to school districts.
- Only 30% of the principals reported they had more power to hire and fire staff. Many principals stated that they already had the authority to hire staff prior to Ed. Reform, with the approval of the superintendent.
- Principals reported no change in their ability to fire incompetent staff due to teacher contracts, fear of litigation, and lengthy and complicated dismissal procedures.
- Principals reported that the loss of collective bargaining rights and tenure had had a negative effect on many aspects of their jobs.
- Only 50% of the principals reported that the superintendent had negotiated a fair written contract with them.
- Principals reported a loss of benefits such as vacation time, sick leave bank, and salary compensation for years of service and step raises due to the change in contract negotiations.

- Only 56% of principals received a written evaluation from their superintendent, and many principals reported that they wrote their own evaluations, adding to their workload.
- Seventy-four percent of the principals felt less secure in their jobs as a result of lost collective bargaining rights and tenure, stating they felt they worked at the whim of their superintendents and could be fired without proper cause.
- Principals reported that the increase of responsibilities under Ed. Reform, coupled with the loss of union protection, strongly impacted their willingness to take risks on their job.
- Principals reported that the loss of collective bargaining power led to feelings of isolation and competition among principals, and discrepancies in administrator salaries that they were powerless to control.

Research Question 4: Principal Support and Stress

Given that the Massachusetts Education Reform Act has changed working conditions and increased responsibilities for principals, how have elementary principals in Massachusetts coped with these changes and what support do they feel for the job they are doing?

The responses to the question in this section show that, despite the added responsibilities and loss of job security, principals feel supported by their school districts, staff, and parents for the job they are doing in their schools. Principals are seeking out professional development opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills, and in general feel they have a support group of people they can confer with to discuss issues and concerns. However, principals overwhelmingly reported feeling added stress in their jobs due to the demands of Ed. Reform, and feel that the teacher's union

and, in some cases, the superintendent, make it difficult for them to implement needed reforms in their buildings. These results are summarized in Table 18 (page 151).

An analysis of the questions on Principal Support and Stress shows that 90% of the respondents felt comfortable talking to other principals in their district about improvement efforts, although only 76% reported they had a support group of people to talk to when they wanted to discuss problems, a more personal action. One respondent commented, "Principals are discussing their concerns more openly since everyone is experiencing new concerns" (#50). Principals also reported feeling supported for the job they are doing in their schools, with 97% reporting they had the support of their staff, 94% having the support of parents, 83% having the support of the superintendent, and 82% having the support of school committee.

Ninety percent of principals felt comfortable taking risks and trying new approaches and programs in their schools. This is an interesting contrast to question 3.12, in which 74% of the principals reported feeling less secure in their jobs because of the changes in their working conditions, and indicated they were less likely to take risks because of this insecurity. As stated by one principal, "Principals are asked to take more risks, yet are more vulnerable under Ed. Reform" (#62). It appears that principals are willing to take these educational risks anyway, possibly because of the strong support they feel for the job they are doing in their schools. The MESPA survey of principals found that 30% of the respondents felt strongly that they were comfortable taking risks. This corresponds with the 28% who strongly agreed with this statement on the current survey.

Table 18
Responses of Principals: Principal Support and Stress

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	No Answer
4.1	I feel that the superintendent listens and values my input on educational matters in my school and my district.	26 28%	41 44%	18 19%	5 5%	3 3%	1 1%
		SA/A: 72%		SD/D: 24%			
4.2	I feel comfortable talking to other principals in my district about school improvement efforts.	43 46%	41 44%	6 6%	1 1%		3 3%
		SA/A: 90%		SD/D: 7%			
4.3	I feel comfortable taking risks and trying new approaches and programs in my school.	26 28%	58 62%	8 9%	2 2%		
		SA/A: 90%		SD/D: 11%			
4.4	I have the support of my superintendent for the job I am doing in my school.	37 39%	41 44%	9 10%	1 1%	5 5%	1 1%
		SA/A: 83%		SD/D: 11%			
4.5	I have the support of my staff for the job I am doing in my school.	31 33%	60 64%		1 1%	2 2%	
		SA/A: 97%		SD/D: 1%			
4.6	I have the support of the parents for the job I am doing in my school.	35 37%	54 57%	2 2%		3 3%	
		SA/A: 94%		SD/D: 2%			
4.7	I have the support of School Committee for the job I am doing in my school.	24 26%	53 56%	2 2%	1 1%	14 15%	
		SA/A: 82%		SD/D: 3%			
4.8	I take advantage of professional development opportunities to increase my skills and knowledge as a principal.	42 45%	47 50%	3 3%	2 2%		
		SA/A: 95%		SD/D: 5%			
4.9	I have a support group of people I can talk to when I have problems that I need to discuss.	27 29%	44 47%	18 19%	4 4%		1 1%
		SA/A: 76%		SD/D: 23%			
4.10	I feel added stress as a principal due to the demands of Mass. Ed. Reform.	44 47%	43 46%	4 4%	1 1%	2 2%	
		SA/A: 93%		SD/D: 5%			
4.11	There has been an increase in conflicts and stress in my building as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform.	21 22%	30 32%	30 32%	4 4%	7 7%	2 2%
		SA/A: 54%		SD/D: 36%			
4.12	Provisions of the teacher's contract and the teacher's union have made it difficult to implement needed reforms in my school.	20 21%	43 46%	25 27%	4 4%	2 2%	
		SA/A: 67%		SD/D: 31%			
4.13	The actions and policies of my superintendent have made it difficult to implement needed reforms in my school	4 4%	20 21%	40 43%	24 26%	4 4%	2 2%
		SA/A: 25%		SD/D: 69%			

Principals also reported that they took advantage of professional development opportunities to increase their skills and knowledge as a principal, with 95% of the respondents agreeing with this statement. One principal commented, however, that those days are seen as absences by the superintendent, another principal stated that she didn't have time to participate in these activities, and a third principal indicated he was not able to do this because the superintendent decided his professional development opportunities. The MESPA survey found similar results, with principals overwhelmingly seeking out opportunities to improve their skills. However, less than half of the MESPA respondents felt strongly that funding for professional development for teachers and principals had improved in the past few years.

In the area of stress, 93% of the principals who responded stated that they felt more stress due to the demands of Ed. Reform, with 47% strongly agreeing with that statement. However, only 54% reported an increase in conflicts and stress in their buildings as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform. Comments from principals clarified that they had seen an increase in stress, but not necessarily conflicts, explaining the discrepancy in the results of these two questions. One principal reported an increase in stress due to added committee work with no additional time. Another respondent stated, "HIGH, HIGH STRESS! Like managing a million \$ business with no help!" (#63). It is interesting that in the principal interviews, when asked only about increased stress and not conflicts, 7 out of 10 principals responded that they were under more stress since Ed. Reform, with 3 principals claiming that there would be stress in the principal's job regardless of Ed.

Reform. This 70% figure may be a more accurate representation of increased stress for principals.

A specific area of stress for principals was the provisions of the teacher's contract and teacher's union, which can make it difficult to implement needed reforms in schools. Sixty-seven percent of principals agreed with this statement. As stated by one respondent, "This is the biggest problem. Change is difficult!" (#48). Another principal commented, "It's hard to take risks because staff is territorial and quite contract oriented" (#42). On the MESPA survey, 52% of the respondents felt strongly that teacher contracts had had a major impact on their management authority.

Another possible obstacle to a principal's ability to implement needed reforms is the superintendent, with 25% of the respondents agreeing that this was a problem for them. The two other questions on superintendents in this section (4.1 and 4.4), indicate that approximately 20-30% of the principals surveyed felt that the relationship with their superintendent negatively impacted on their management and leadership authority to bring about change in their schools. On the MESPA survey, only 21% of the respondents felt strongly that there was "a viable balance of authority between the principalship, the superintendent, and the school committee in the governance area" (p.8). The influence of the superintendent on the principal's ability to implement reforms was stressed by an educational consultant and former principal during a preliminary interview for this study. He commented:

The competent superintendent is...much more likely to support you - they're allowing you to take some risks. With a superintendent who is not competent, they feel their job is on the line if you screw up. So although the state is

mandating, under Ed. Reform, some change, it better be safe change....I really see the superintendent as a key figure, and that's what I'm finding throughout the state. My ability to effect change in a building is almost directly related to the effectiveness of the superintendent and their ability to really allow that kind of change to occur in a building and feel comfortable with it. ("Steve", 8/11/98, p.2)

The interviews expanded on principal's insights of their job support and stress as it relates to the demands of the Mass. Ed. Reform Act. Principals commented that they felt supported by their staff and the parents in their schools. As reported by Joe, without that support principals didn't last in their jobs even before the advent of Ed. Reform. He stated, "Even when we had tenure, for a principal to survive, you have to have the support of the teachers and the parents. And if you ever lost the majority of either one, you didn't last long either with or without tenure" (p.8). Mark explained that Ed. Reform has forced principals to work with staff and parents in order to be successful. He commented:

I think those of us who have been successful in the Ed. Reform era, were those of us who were pro-parent and pro-community involvement to begin with. And those of us who weren't are in deep shit because they're being forced to do it...and they create a school improvement table with the teachers on this side and the parents on that side, and there's this big mistrust and battle over who's going to tell who how to do what. (p.4)

Principals' sense of support from school committee varied, often depending on the size of the school district. Principals in smaller towns reported intense scrutiny from the school committee, almost to the point of micro-managing the schools. Mark stated, "I think [Ed. Reform] has effected how we as a team of administrators deal with the school committee, who are very confused about Ed. Reform. They don't know what their role is, which is to make policy. But they're constantly interfering at implementation, etc."

(p.13). In a larger, urban setting, Peter reported that principals don't have a lot of relationships with the school committee, except "if your school wasn't doing really well, then they're on your case" (p.20).

As on the questionnaire, the principals' relationship with their superintendent was reported as a key factor in their ability to implement meaningful reforms in their schools. As stated by Mary, "Some of the negatives [of Ed. Reform] are you still have a wall you go to when you want to change something that you still need the superintendent to say yes" (p.1). Principals reported that the management and leadership style of the superintendent varied greatly, from those who were very supportive of the principal's work, to "autocrats who will dictate what everybody's going to do" (Bob, p.10). Mary commented that she had to understand her superintendent's style before she was able to work effectively with him. When asked if she was comfortable working with her superintendent, she answered, "Had you asked me that when I first came here the first two years I would have said no. But it's like anything else, if you work with someone and read them and you know their style, you begin to work around that style" (p.6). She claimed that other principals in her district whose style wasn't a good match for the superintendent were less comfortable taking risks and trying new things in their buildings. Mark described a similar problem with his former superintendent: "He and I were diametrically opposed in terms of how to work with people. He was the guy who was very authoritarian, saw the teachers as worker bees, and they'll do what we tell them to do....And I don't believe in that. I was miserable" (p.15).

The lack of support of superintendents for the work of the principals was reported as having a great impact on the programs that are successfully implemented in the schools. As stated by Joe:

It's disheartening to have criticism of a program that's been highly successful for over 20 years, and then have it dismissed without ever taking the time to find out about the program or see it in operation....In all the superintendents we've had, one or two letters, or offhand comments from the public, carry more weight than the combined opinion and information of all the principals in town. (p.13)

Without the support of the superintendent, principals won't take risks for fear of repercussions. Bob reported, "You can get hung out to dry as a principal. Therefore, they don't dare do anything, dare change anything, because [they] know [they're] going to get blamed for whatever happens" (p.10). Peter reported that it's possible to take on a strong superintendent if you have community support and political savvy. Describing a situation where he had challenged the superintendent's decision by getting his parents to lobby at a school committee, he stated:

Did the superintendent get pissed? Yes, she did get pissed. Was she afterwards okay about it? Yes, she was. Because she knew that we had won the political battle. And she also knew that she wasn't going to be able to get rid of me. But she didn't want to get rid of me because she knew I was doing a good job. (p.7)

Kathy describes the opposite situation where the town has a weak superintendent who doesn't do her job, causing more responsibility to fall on the other school administrators, and leaving a void in leadership. She stated:

There are sometimes weeks that go by that I haven't spoken to the superintendent or seen her. And generally speaking, the school committee here runs itself....And so some real horrible things happen occasionally, because the school committee doesn't have a sense of what it's purpose is. And I feel strongly that the superintendent's primary job is to have trained them to know where they fit into the scheme of things. (p.11)

John felt that the impact of superintendents on the principal's job had more to do with their individual personality and prior experience, rather than the position of superintendent itself. He commented, "I think if you have a superintendent that has building administration experience, they have a better understanding of what you're confronted with....I think it boils down to the people in those positions, and not the positions themselves based on job descriptions" (p.9).

Superintendents are also cited by principals for creating competitiveness between principals, either intentionally or because of the demands of Ed. Reform. Betsy claimed that she used to have a collegial group of principals to work with in her district, but her superintendent "felt his goal was to divide and conquer" (p.6), creating competition among principals. She stated, "I have very few principals that I feel confident sharing ideas, and that's sad, because before that we were all in it together, and the group was better than the one...and we had good collegiality going" (p.7). She commented that this competitiveness was one of the factors that led to her decision to leave her current job. Peter, on the other hand, credited his new superintendent with working to bring the principals in his district back together. He stated, "The tone for 15, 18 years in this city has been one of competition rather than cooperation. And, with this new superintendent, she really believes in cooperation, and things working together, and I think we've gotten re-inspired to have people working more together and working cooperatively" (p.12).

Other principals also blamed Ed. Reform provisions and demands for increased feelings of competition among principals. John stated:

I see and I hear in other districts that Ed. Reform is creating competitiveness amongst building principals, amongst buildings, based on principal salary incentives, based on test scores when the demographics of schools within a city or a town can be totally different. But there are false comparisons being made, false conclusions being made, regarding the effectiveness of learning in respective buildings. (p.7)

John felt this competition was detrimental to the principal's ability to bring about change, and recognized the role of the superintendent in supporting principals. He commented:

I think teamwork is very important....It's incumbent [for] building principals to have the opportunity to function as a team, with their talent and experience to be recognized by central office, and to be drawn upon. But also to provide us with the support, and the resources to do the job at the building level....I don't think it's there yet, because of Ed. Reform the competitive piece that it's added to school systems. (p.7)

Mark blamed other provisions of the Ed. Reform Act for creating a competitive climate between principals, including fighting for school funding, publicity over MCAS scores, the loss of the ability to negotiate as a group, the inequality of contracts, and the perceived need for equity between buildings. He stated:

The better we do, the more uptight the superintendent gets about this elementary school going away from the other two....That's something I don't think Ed. Reform has helped with, the collaboration amongst schools. I think everyone's circled the wagons and then started shooting at each other. Over who's going to come out #1 in the city and in that newspaper clipping....I think that we've all been put on the defensive by Ed. Reform, that it almost seemed punitive in some way. Particularly to the principals. (p.6)

Other factors cited by principals for the loss of collegiality were the increased time pressures and responsibilities of Ed. Reform that made it difficult for them to get away from their buildings and meet on a regular basis. Bob commented that elementary principals in his county used to meet regularly, but had only met once or twice since the

advent of Ed. Reform. He claimed that the issue was not just a matter of having the time to meet, stating:

I think people will find time for something, but somehow people are distracted enough by other kinds of issues and pressures that were not there originally....I think that there's so much pressure in many cases put on the principal that they don't dare be out of the place...this higher sense of responsibility. And not the back-up. It's my neck, my contract, my dumb job. You don't dare leave! (p.7-8)

Despite the competitiveness and lack of support at times, principals still felt comfortable taking risks in their jobs, and talked about the importance of trying new things in order to bring about change. Mary and John saw themselves as models for risk-taking for the teachers and students in their buildings. Mary stated, "When [the teachers] realize that I'll take a risk, they're beginning to take risks. I couldn't survive if I didn't take risks" (p.5). Betsy claimed that she's comfortable taking risks because she's gained some experience with the job and she knows she's supported by the central office. She explained, "I credit my comfort [with taking risks] with the leadership at central office, because I know they like me, they know I do a good job, so they trust me. I feel confident to do that, but that comes with years" (p.4). Mark agreed that you need experience and self-assurance in order to feel comfortable taking risks, and stated that education requires risks to bring about change. He stated:

I thrive on risks. I think that has to come from a certain experience and self-assurance that if you don't make it, so what, life goes on. I think it's the people who aren't taking risks that people get pretty bored with fairly early. The status quo in education is a death knell. You can never sit back and say well, there, it's done. Because it changes. (p.7)

Peter felt supported by his staff, central office, and school committee for taking risks, but cautioned that principals need to take care of politics in order to do that, "which most

educators don't know a hell of a lot about" (p.8). On the negative side, Linda noted a number of ways that Ed. Reform had made her uncomfortable taking risks and trying innovative programs, including loss of job security, efforts to tie a principal's salary to MCAS scores, and insecurity in leadership when a new superintendent is hired. She stated:

We are in the process of hiring a new superintendent...Virtually all [the candidates] wanted to tie our principals' salaries to merit pay, most often based on test scores. If my livelihood is tied to it, there's only a certain amount of risk I'm going to take. It's only a matter of time, if your salary is tied to that, that your evaluation is going to be tied to that, too. There's no room for any innovation in a situation like that...So, I don't feel that I can totally stick my neck out there now, because there's no job security, and there's just too much at stake. So, it's real hard to be a risk-taker. (p.4-5)

Principals also talked about the negative impact of the teachers' union and teachers' contract on their ability to bring about change and reforms in their schools. Five out of ten principals mentioned a restriction on their meeting time with staff because of provisions of the teachers' contract. As stated in section 1 on time, this makes it difficult for principals to meet and discuss curriculum and instruction with their staffs, and to focus on school improvement efforts. Linda stated, "We're hampered in the teacher's contract by the amount of time we can hold meetings, both the frequency and the duration of the meetings" (p.5). Betsy commented that her teachers were pretty good about coming to meetings, but she doesn't "mandate anything that goes against the contract because I'm just not interested in that problem" (p.10). Emily stated that more money would give her the time she needed to work with her staff. She commented:

I would like to be able to have more time to meet with the teachers, and, of course, time costs money. And that's wherein the rub lies. You can't buy the time if the

district cannot give the money, and the teachers will get their coats on and walk right out that door when the hour approaches, which says they are through. (p.8)

John, on the other hand, claimed that collaborative bargaining with the teachers' union had given him ample time and opportunities for meeting with teachers. Kathy also reported that her open relationship with the union allowed them to talk about problems and come to a mutual agreement. She stated:

We'll...just talk things through if we can. I haven't ever had a grievance filed. I think it's just because of the way we deal with each other here. We'll work it out if we can figure out how to work it out. And I think part of this, too, is my philosophy is, I'll work as hard as I can here, but I expect you to work as hard as you can, too. (p.10)

Principals also reported that the teachers' union protected poor teachers and blocked principals from firing them. Betsy claimed that any union issue or grievance she had ever had was linked to dealing with weak teachers. She stated, "Teachers' unions were instituted to protect teachers from being let go at the whim of someone who maybe didn't like them personally. We don't need that any more - we have laws, we have due process" (p.10). Linda reported:

If you see a teacher who is not implementing what needs to be implemented, you can start going through devising a growth plan for that person, and then monitoring the person and doing the paperwork that's involved, and all the observations and write-ups. And I've seen that for all of the talk giving principals more of an opportunity to discharge staff members who aren't doing their job, what I've seen from court cases is that longevity in the profession is giving them even more protection. So, the unions can be a major obstacle. (p.8-9)

Bob claimed that he was always careful, when talking to staff, not to "stir up that union rep who's out there being afraid something's going to happen that will change the field" (p.11). He felt that the union needed to be brought into the decision-making

process that is implementing Ed. Reform, citing the Ford Motor Company as an example of a company where that has happened. He commented:

If you can involve the union in the decision-making process, in which they seriously see themselves as involved in the decision, and part of that, and trying to make it happen, then, for example, Ford Motor Company hasn't had a labor action for ions, whereas General Motors, which is still very much an old management versus labor model, is not working. I think most schools are still in a General Motors model, and not a Ford model. I really don't think teachers have been brought on board. (p.11)

The collaborative involvement of teachers' unions in reform efforts is the goal of the Teacher Union Reform Network (TURN), a group of local affiliates of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association. TURN calls for teachers to accept responsibility for change and see themselves as change agents working collaboratively with administration to improve instruction in the schools.

The primary goal of TURN is to promote new union models that can take the lead in building and sustaining high-achieving schools through improving the quality of instruction. The culture of labor/management relations in the education community must change to one of shared responsibility, characterized by cooperation to improve instruction, rather than one of traditional polarized roles and adversarial relationships. (Urbanski & Erskine, 2000, p.367-368)

TURN lists their three areas of focus as professional development, preservice education, and compensation redesign. It's interesting to note that teacher evaluation and dismissal of poor teachers is not one aspect of their reform.

With all the changes in their jobs as a result of Ed. Reform, 7 out of 10 principals reported an increase in stress on their jobs, with three principals reporting that there would be stress in their jobs regardless of Ed. Reform. This stress came from a variety of sources, including:

- public perception that the schools are not doing a good job
- responsibility for everything that goes on in the building
- mediocre MCAS test scores
- a diverse student population with diverse needs
- too many constituencies (parents, school committee, administration, legislators, Department of Education, business community)
- administrative meetings with central staff and other principals
- lack of support from the superintendent
- lack of parental support for school decisions
- parents with poor parenting skills
- parents who feel entitled and are very demanding
- liability of making decisions with no job security or support
- demands on principal's time from staff and parents
- demands on principal's time due to increased responsibilities of Ed. Reform

In describing her biggest reason for stress, Linda stated, "It's the public's perception that I believe media and politicians are feeding them and our inability to get the message out...that to me is the biggest frustration - public perception being so distorted" (p.6). Mark described his biggest stress as the time demands of "have-you-got-a-minutes", which change him from a "big, ripe, juicy, plump" fruit in the morning to a prune in the afternoon with all the "juice sucked out of me, and I've got nothing left emotionally or physically to give" (p.8-9). Mark also stated:

Somehow it seemed to me that everything had fallen into my lap now, in terms of getting the business world, the teaching world, the parental world, to somehow come together and come to some form of consensus as to what was the best way to educate kids....I was ready to jump out of education, because it seemed like an impossible task to me. There were just too many constituencies to keep happy, and every decision I made pissed half the group off. (p.8)

In describing the effect of this increased stress, John stated, "This is not the same person that used to work here prior to Ed. Reform" (p.5). Mary described the effect that this constant stress has on her ability to do her job as a principal:

After awhile, you feel there's somebody on your back saying, liability, liability, liability....I think that kind of stress wears you down more than anything else because it's preventing you from moving the way you want to move right away.... I think it's a mind stress, and so you get tired out and you're not thinking clearly. (p.8)

Principals described a variety of ways in which they coped with this stressful job situation. Major coping mechanisms included disciplining oneself to leave problems at work, working in the classroom with students, developing outside interests, playing soothing music, and keeping your sense of humor. Principals also mentioned the importance of the support of families, colleagues, and professional organizations such as the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association. Mary stated, "When I know...it's getting to me, and I'm not making good decisions...I spend a day in the classroom...working with children, meeting with teachers, getting out on the playground....Those are the places where the kids lift you right back up and stress goes out the door" (p.8). John claimed that exercise and nutrition are very important, and mentioned that a great stress reliever for him "is to broaden your horizons through reading, taking courses that go beyond education - attend a workshop or evening course that has nothing to do with education!" (p.5). Bob talked about the importance of leaving problems at work and not taking them home. He reported:

I'm fortunate because...I can just leave it at work....I think that's probably critical to survive in the job - if you can't you're going to crash.... You cross over some

stupid line of 50 or 60 hours a week and you're still there weekends. I refuse, that's it, I do my work and I'm going to try really hard, but I do walk away from it. (p.8)

Seven out of ten principals also mentioned the importance of having a support group of people to talk to about the problems and stresses of the job. This corresponds to the 76% of principals who reported having a support group on the questionnaire. John stated, "Networking with colleagues is important to validate what you really know is true but you forget that everyone is experiencing the same thing, that you're not there by yourself" (p.4-5). Peter described getting out the anger and frustration of the job by talking to others, getting a different perspective on problems and issues, and getting rid of the loneliness and isolation of the job (p.11). Kathy and Linda mentioned the support of MESPA in providing a place where they can talk and feel that someone is listening to them. Kathy stated, "That is where I can go to restore my soul....I feel like I'm listened to there as well, that some of the things we've done here, other people want to hear about and try to do" (p.15).

Interestingly, both Mary and Emily mentioned the need to have female administrators to talk to, and the difficulty they sometimes have talking to male administrators, who have different leadership styles. None of the male principals mentioned this difference in gender as an issue. Mary stated:

I enjoy working with male principals, but their style is so different....If the stress is due to a problem...I'm very comfortable picking up the phone and asking him....But to sit down and try to brainstorm, their style's too different...there's never a closure, there's never a follow-up. (p.8-9)

Mary mentioned having a support group of female administrators from surrounding districts who meet on a regular basis for dinner and talk. She reported, "It's a release of stress, it's not confidential stuff we're talking out, but you're running into this problem, how would you work with it, that type of thing" (p.9).

Summary of Research Question #4

In summary, the following key points were made by principals regarding the support they feel for the jobs they are doing, and how they have coped with the many changes and added stress as a result of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act:

- Principals felt a great deal of support from staff (97%) and parents (94%) for the jobs they were doing in their schools.
- Principals felt less support from their superintendents (83%) and their school committees (82%) for the jobs they were doing in their schools.
- Principals felt comfortable talking to other principals in their district about improvement efforts, but less comfortable talking to them about problems that they were experiencing in their schools.
- Despite changes in working conditions that decreased job security, 90% of principals surveyed still felt comfortable taking risks and trying new approaches and programs in their schools, in part due to the support they felt from staff, parents, and central office.
- Principals saw themselves as models for their teachers and students in taking risks and trying new approaches, but felt that the comfort to take risks came with experience and self-assurance.
- Principals reported that they are taking advantage of professional development opportunities to increase their skills and knowledge, and see these activities as providing personal support and affirmation for the work they are doing.

- Principals reported that their relationships with their school committees varied, from intense scrutiny and micro-management to an almost complete lack of contact unless the school wasn't doing well. The differences in this relationship appeared to be somewhat dependent on the size of the school district.
- Principals reported that their relationship with the superintendent was a key factor in their ability to implement meaningful reforms in their schools, for a number of reasons:
 - Many superintendents still had control over a principal's school-based decisions.
 - Superintendents' management and leadership style effected the principals' ability to implement change, especially if there was a mismatch between styles.
 - Principals reported that superintendents often listened more to public opinion and politics, rather than the knowledge and experience of the principals.
 - Principals reported a fear of taking risks because of possible repercussions by the superintendent if they failed.
 - A weak superintendent also had a negative impact on the principal's ability to implement reforms and change because of a lack of protection and district leadership.
 - Superintendents sometimes fostered an unhealthy competition among schools and principals, leading to divisiveness and lack of collegiality.
- Principals stated that competition between schools and principals was also fostered by the demands and provisions of the Ed. Reform Act due to factors such as school funding, test scores, salary incentives based on test scores, the loss of collective bargaining, and inequity in contracts.
- The time demands and added responsibilities of the Ed. Reform Act were cited as having a negative impact on principals' ability and willingness to leave their buildings to meet with colleagues.

- Principals reported that the teachers' union and teachers' contract had a negative impact on their ability to implement reforms in their buildings due to limitations on the time they were able to meet with staff, and their inability to fire ineffective teachers.
- Some principals stated that they had a good collaborative relationship with the teachers' union that allowed them to implement reforms, and called for teachers' unions to have a more active decision-making role in the development and implementation of the Education Reform Act.
- With all the changes in their jobs as a result of Ed. Reform, principals reported they felt an increase in stress on their jobs. This stress came from a variety of sources, including lack of support from the central office; increased responsibilities and time demands with decreased job security; over-emphasis on MCAS scores, especially in schools with diverse student demographics; difficult parents; demands of multiple and often conflicting constituencies; and a negative public perception of the work being done by the schools.
- Principals described a variety of ways in which they coped with this stressful job situation, including disciplining themselves to leave work at school, working with students, developing outside interests, keeping a sense of humor, and developing a support system of families, colleagues, and professional organizations.
- Female principals reported a need to build a support group of other female administrators, as they felt the differing styles of male administrators were not always compatible with what they were looking for in a support group.

Research Question 5: Student Learning

Given that the purpose of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act was to raise the standard of learning for students, how do elementary principals in Massachusetts perceive that the role they play under Education Reform has improved student learning in their schools?

The responses to the questions in this section show that principals felt that the Education Reform Act and the curriculum frameworks had improved the quality of education in their schools. They also responded that the MCAS tests would have a major impact on the curriculum and instruction in their schools. Principals reported that they felt personally responsible for the academic performance of their students, and that their efforts and the programs they had implemented had improved the quality of instruction in their schools. However, principals didn't feel that the Education Reform Act had resulted in them having a greater impact on the quality of education in their schools. These results are summarized in Table 19 (page 170).

An analysis of the responses on student learning shows that 75% of the principals felt that the Education Reform Act had improved the quality of instruction in their school, and 70% reported that the curriculum frameworks had improved the quality of education. Comments from this section show that principals saw many positive outcomes of the Education Reform Act as it related to improved student learning. Many district curriculums had been re-written to align with the state frameworks, and principals felt there was more consistency of curriculums. They also saw the positive effect of having standards to guide assessment. One principal reported, "The frameworks...did give us standards to base assessment of curriculum" (#24). On the negative side, principals reported that the frameworks are continually being reviewed and changed, making it difficult for some districts to re-align their curriculum. A principal stated, "Frameworks have helped to insure some consistency of curriculum. However, each

subject area is so different and now they are being reviewed again (world language and social studies). We're never sure when to change our curriculum" (#43).

Table 19
Responses of Principals: Student Learning

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	No Answer
5.1	The quality of instruction in my school has improved as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform.	11 12%	59 63%	17 18%	2 2%	4 4%	1 1%
		SA/A: 75%		SD/D: 20%			
5.2	The Curriculum Frameworks have improved the quality of education in my school.	10 11%	55 59%	18 19%	4 4%	6 6%	1 1%
		SA/A: 70%		SD/D: 23%			
5.3	I feel personally accountable for the academic performance of my students.	34 36%	41 44%	15 16%	1 1%	2 2%	1 1%
		SA/A: 80%		SD/D: 17%			
5.4	The results of the MCAS test will have a major impact on the curriculum and instruction in my school.	38 40%	36 38%	10 11%	3 3%	6 6%	1 1%
		SA/A: 78%		SD/D: 14%			
5.5	I have a greater impact on the quality of education in my school since Mass. Ed. Reform.	3 3%	30 32%	41 44%	7 7%	11 12%	2 2%
		SA/A: 35%		SD/D: 51%			
5.6	My efforts as a principal have a direct impact on the academic performance of my students.	24 26%	58 62%	6 6%	1 1%	3 3%	2 2%
		SA/A: 88%		SD/D: 7%			
5.7	My evaluation of teachers has improved the academic performance of students in my school.	4 4%	61 65%	17 18%	2 2%	8 9%	2 2%
		SA/A: 69%		SD/D: 20%			
5.8	The programs I have implemented have improved the quality of instruction in my school.	16 17%	70 74%	2 2%		3 3%	3 3%
		SA/A: 91%		SD/D: 2%			

The impact of funding from Ed. Reform for curriculum development showed an interesting contrast between urban and rural areas. As already noted in chapter 4,

question 3, principals reported that funding for schools had improved in urban districts, with little change or a loss of money to rural and suburban areas, especially on Cape Cod and in the western part of the state. In this section, an urban educator commented:

The funding has made a great positive impact on the curriculum and instruction offered in my school. Staff are paid for professional development during the summer or Saturdays or after school. 100% of the staff take advantage of this opportunity. We have locally developed curriculum guides for all subject areas. These were funded through Ed. Reform monies. (#27)

In contrast, a principal from a rural area in the western part of the state reported that instruction and education in her building had improved, but she was not sure she could attribute the change to Ed. Reform. She commented, "As a staff, we continue to grow and have looked to grant sources to support our growth. Ed. Reform has highlighted improvement, but not backed it up with dollars" (#82).

Regarding the state MCAS test, 78% of the principals felt that it would have a major impact on the curriculum and instruction in their schools. (It should be noted that this questionnaire was completed by principals after the first MCAS test had been given, but before the scores had been released to them.) However, comments show that principals saw more of a negative impact of the MCAS test than a positive one. One principal commented, "Children and teachers are stressed. Lower functioning children's parents are angry" (#7). Another principal saw the curriculum frameworks and MCAS as driving the curriculum, but felt the results of the MCAS would be disheartening and lead to more "teacher bashing" (#86). A third principal blamed politicians and the State Board of Education for the negative impact of the MCAS test. He stated:

In the beginning I was a strong supporter of Mass Ed Reform. I was all for strengthening standards and strengthening school-based management. I have seen the movement corrupted and perverted by headline-seeking politicians and State Board of Education members. Mass. students have long been among the highest performers in the nation on the national assessment and on nationally standardized tests. MCAS tests have been tampered with. The tests are much too long and demanding of 9 year olds. We are one of the highest performing schools on previous tests, but it took our 4th graders 20 hours to complete the battery. We're tired of headline-seekers telling us how dumb our students are and how incompetent our teachers are. (#77)

On the topic of accountability for student learning, principals reported that their efforts directly effected the improvement of student learning in their schools. Eighty percent of the principals stated that they felt personally accountable for the academic performance of their students. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents reported that their efforts as a principal had a direct impact on their students' academic performance, and 91% felt that the programs they had implemented had improved the quality of instruction in their schools. However, only 35% of the principals felt that their impact on the quality of education in their schools was attributable to the Ed. Reform Act. One respondent stated, "What is going on was going on before Ed. Reform. However, something was needed" (54). One principal clarified her role in school improvement, stating, "I don't feel I alone am responsible for the school and academic performance, but I do play a major role in assuring we move forward positively" (#42). Another principal stated, "I don't implement programs, the staff implements. I support and work in the development of programs" (#24).

Another important role for principals was in the area of teacher evaluation, with 69% of the respondents reporting that their evaluation of teachers had improved the

academic performance of students in their schools. However, principals reported that this was an area of resistance from some of their teachers. One principal commented that "It is an on-going struggle to help some teachers consistently improve instruction" (#81). Another principal reported, "Teacher resistance to change has a negative impact. Teachers still feel 'entitled' to the job and protected by seniority. There is strong resistance to [the] performance evaluation instrument" (#63).

The interviews expanded on the perceptions of principals as to their impact on student learning and performance in their schools as a result of the Mass. Ed. Reform Act. In the area of curriculum reform and realignment, most principals felt Ed. Reform had had a positive effect by highlighting the need for a sequential, consistent curriculum for schools and districts. Betsy stated, "I think the most positive effect is the curriculum changes that are being made....I think the heightened awareness of the need to have curriculum be more sequential" (p.1). On the MESPA survey, 65% of the principals reported that curriculum efforts of Ed. Reform had "moved instruction in their schools in a positive direction despite the added personal responsibilities and time required" (p.4).

Betsy felt that her leadership style was a good match for this focus on realigning curriculum and trying new things, and stated that she supported her teachers by providing them with the resources they needed to implement the new curriculum. It's interesting to note that both Betsy and Peter credited increased funding to urban school systems under Ed. Reform for their ability to fund curriculum development for their teachers. This additional funding wasn't mentioned by other principals in rural or suburban school systems.

Bob claimed that the Ed. Reform Act had empowered school systems to bring about needed changes in their curriculum. He stated, "It has enabled us to kick some things and say, we just can't keep doing that, we've gotta change what we're doing and do some things differently in the curriculum" (p.9). Mark stated that the Ed. Reform Act had helped his district re-think their curriculum and identify areas of deficiency, especially math and science. He stated that, "Math and science continue to be an area that I think this entire state has their head in the sand over, particularly when it comes to young girls and how they see themselves in that regard. When you put 10-20% of your resources every year from a budget into math and science, and 80-90% into language arts, that's the return you're going to get" (p.2).

Kathy claimed that her district was already involved in an extensive review of the curriculum before the Ed. Reform Act, and felt that the state's focus on the curriculum frameworks had had a negative impact on the work she was doing with her staff. She stated:

And then came the frameworks. And things weren't fitting so nicely anymore. And I think we've had more of a struggle with that. And what I found my role now...has much more to do with making people feel that everything they've done isn't bad, and to keep it in perspective. I very carefully don't want frameworks to be driving what we do here. (p.4)

Kathy also said, "I think your curriculum has to grow from within, it has to grow from the strength and expectation of your community no matter what the state says" (p.15). She also stated that the excessive time needed to cover all the state curriculum requirements took away time from other important aspects of the curriculum such as social skills, conflict resolution, and self-esteem.

Other principals had mixed feelings about the state curriculum frameworks. On the positive side, principals stated that the frameworks provided a scope and sequence for curriculum, jump-started some districts to review and reform their curriculums, provided a focus for teacher professional development, and set high standards and expectations for student learning. Joe stated:

I do applaud the shift in emphasis toward the higher end of the spectrum, toward the higher cognitive skills, and more emphasis on academics. This was, in my opinion, very necessary to offset the excessive pressure...to dumb down the curriculum, so that the least able youngster could do everything that everybody else did. (p.3)

On the negative side, principals reported that they were frustrated with the many changes that kept occurring with the frameworks, and felt some of them were "not in line with reality" (Betsy, p.11). Principals were especially critical of the social studies framework, claiming that the subjects were in the wrong order for studying, that it represented a specific Western perspective, that it was too broad in the subjects it covered, and that it focused on small details rather than historical concepts. Peter reported that he had contacted seven different school districts and found that they were each doing something different in elementary social studies because they weren't comfortable aligning with the current social studies framework. Kathy also questioned the large scope of knowledge contained in each framework, stating, "To do any of the frameworks the way they've been laid out, would mean that you teach social studies for 180 days, six hours a day" (p.12).

It's interesting to note that both Bob and Peter strongly endorsed the new math frameworks because it supported more problem solving and aligned with the NCTM

standards, as opposed to focusing on rote memory. In the year since these interviews, the state unveiled a new math framework that reverted back to a more rigid computational model at the expense of understanding math concepts, a move that prompted the teachers on the committee to walk out and refuse to sign the updated framework. As stated in a letter from Glenda Lappan, president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, to David Driscoll, current Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, "The traditional mathematics curriculum, which promotes the status quo, is not working....A return to methods and curriculum that have produced a nation of adults who avoid mathematics and find it mysterious is certainly not a solution to our problems" (Lappan, 2000, p.1).

Principals also reported that the focus on strict alignment of the district curriculum with the state frameworks had put a great deal of pressure and stress on teachers and schools, and impacted negatively on the joy and spontaneity of student learning. Linda stated:

There's a lot of joy that used to exist in a school, and I know our critics are going to say that's all the fluff we needed to get rid of. But there's a certain amount of joy that learning and collaboration...can bring about. And there's not as much time for that. Administrators are stressed, teachers are stressed, kids are stressed, parents are stressed....My kids were learning and they were happier beforehand. (p.7)

John was concerned that the over-emphasis on academic learning had impacted negatively on the school's ability to take care of the whole child. He stated, "It's not just the kid's brain that comes to school. You've got a live human being, social needs, emotional needs, physical needs, psychological needs, learning needs. Total child" (p.10).

In the interviews, principals also discussed the impact of the MCAS test on their schools and on student learning. (It should be noted that schools had received their first MCAS test results by the time these interviews took place.) The principals interviewed were consistently negative about the impact of the MCAS test, citing concerns such as the amount of time to administer them that takes away from student learning, the cost, and the minute facts and details that are tested as opposed to larger concepts. Kathy commented:

We really didn't need standardized tests to tell us what they did and didn't know....These teachers knew these children very well....And I didn't feel that the cost of a standardized test, the cost of scoring them, really was important. I really could use that money elsewhere. (p.3)

Joe was concerned about the large body of knowledge that fourth graders were expected to know, commenting:

The reality of the MCAS testing is more and more directed towards learning facts. I cite as [an] example...from the trial on fourth grade, where the fourth graders were expected to know who Monsa-Mosa was, and Zing He. That to me smacks of political influence at its worst. With all the things we need to learn, to expect fourth graders to know everything about world geography and history is a mistake. (p.1-2)

Another concern of principals was the ability of the MCAS to accurately report on student performance and learning, especially in the smaller towns with small numbers of students that skew the statistical base. Another issue was the inequity of comparing two totally different groups of students tested to determine improvement in learning.

Kathy stated:

We have an interesting situation here, and I can't imagine it's just us. There's 52 kids, basically, in the class, so it doesn't meet usual statistical criteria. But everything gets reported, no matter what. Last year's fourth graders were a very

bright class....And then you have some not so bright ones. Our scores were outstanding last year....And it's not going to happen this year....And we've already been coming up with our excuses! (p.17)

The negative publicity and perceptions created by the MCAS were a major concern for principals, who stated that it has put tremendous stress on teachers, students, and parents. Betsy stated, " [The MCAS] is negative, and anyone who wants to think negatively about schools this is fuel for them, you know, when those test scores are published" (p.11). Mary reported:

They're [teachers] worried because it's going to show their class, even though you say...it's not a reflection of the fourth grade teachers. This is education from the day they're born to the day they take the test....But they have to give the test. And they know that everybody's going to see the results. And they don't want to be labeled as a terrible teacher. So, I think, as much as we were allowed to make an inroad on student learning, I think we've now been given a chain fence that keeps going around and it's hurting. But I'll keep going and trying to unlock it. (p.10)

Mary felt that even students felt the pressure of the MCAS, stating, "They're so worried about taking these tests, and performing well, that I really think that, because that's the one feature everybody talks about, that it hurts learning" (p.9). Emily's parents were also "very stressed" about the MCAS. She said that "We've given them the literature that the state has handed out. I've had a parent meeting. We've talked about...what it's like practicing. That doesn't count, because of their perceived social status in the community" (p10).

Principals in general were very negative about the effect of the MCAS and the overall validity of the test. Linda stated, "It's raised our awareness of what's being tested, and what we have to do to look good and make our marks where we have to in the

public's eye, but as far as having high standards and expectations for kids, we always had them" (p.8). Joe questioned the basic structure and validity of the test, stating:

I was absolutely appalled that here...we've advocated for years and years before school reform and in school reform, the higher cognitive skills...how important they are, how important it is to do critical thinking, to teach children critical thinking skills. And then we as educators take a test that's never been tried, that's never been validated anywhere else, flies in the face of all other standardized tests that are used all over the country, and have been for years. And to say, this is gospel, everything else is wrong. I can't believe it. It's the most uncritical thinking! (p.7)

Although principals felt that the MCAS test hadn't improved student learning, they reported that their leadership as a principal had improved student learning in their schools. As Betsy stated, "If I didn't, I wouldn't feel that I should be in the job!" (p.8). Interestingly, not a single principal answered this question in terms of academic success, but instead saw their impact on student learning as relating to social/emotional areas such as recognizing the value of each child, empowering and listening to staff, and building a climate of respect in their building (all areas not standardized and measured by Ed. Reform and MCAS testing). Emily stated, "The children know that I legitimize them as people...they know that I value them, and that, when we're here, our jobs are to learn" (p.7). Kathy answered, "I think it's being nice to each other, respectful to each other. That everyone has something to share, and you need to take the time to listen to what the other kids have to share...I try to find something special in each child" (p.9). Joe claimed that, "In terms of the overall leadership and in my style, I think I've definitely made a difference in this school....Part of my style is to respect and enable the teaching staff and

the support staff to do most of the decision-making and to carry out their ideas” (p.10).

Mark stated:

It took me ten years to learn how to do that....I had this naiveté going into the principalship. I was such a successful teacher....I had a belief that from September to November, cognitive growth be damned, if I didn't get my kids to feel safe, to feel part of a group, to feel part of the climate and culture of our class, nothing was going to happen....I was naive enough to think that what I did for 25-30 kids a year, I could do for 40 teachers, 300+ kids. And it took me ten years of success and failure in the front line as a principal to learn how to do that....And here's what I learned - listen to your teachers with all three ears....No decision will ever be made without the input of absolutely everyone that will be effected by it....I think once teachers understand that you were a teacher at heart first, and that you know what their life is like in the fast lane, things just start to happen quite naturally. (p.11)

Principals commented that, while they felt their own leadership had improved student learning, the provisions of the Ed. Reform Act had not necessarily improved learning. Linda stated that her leadership style and her high standards for student academic, social, and emotional learning had been there long before Ed. Reform. John claimed that “anything that takes me out of classrooms more, you'd have a hard time convincing me that that's going to improve teaching and learning in my classrooms for all of my children” (p.5). He also stated, “You take [teachers] out of the classrooms and that doesn't improve learning. But Ed. Reform is supposed to improve learning. I'm pulling them and getting substitutes. Is that improving learning? No!” (p.8). Mark claimed that Ed. Reform was unrealistic in its expectation that all students should achieve at high levels. He stated:

I even hate the wording that I see in a lot of mission statements and vision, both from the state, where all children can learn, all children will achieve at the “sub-ba-ba” level. You and I know that's never going to happen, it never was, it never will be. And I think Ed. Reform is kidding itself if it thinks that, by putting down

a scope and sequence of what we need to teach, that all children - It's like Lake Woebegone, you know, where everybody is handsome and brilliant, and it's just not going to happen. (p.3)

Principals also commented on their ability to use teacher evaluations to improve teaching skills and student learning. While they see the process as being a valuable tool, they report that the time needed to evaluate teachers effectively is enormous. Linda reported:

The new evaluation we've done in tying it with the teaching and learning standards I think is great in the depth that we have because we have all new instruments that have been re-aligned to meet the standards. But it probably takes 3-4 hours to appropriately do one observation, from the time you spend in the classroom, to the time you spend reflecting on it, writing it up, doing the narrative. (p.3)

The constraints of the teachers' contract and the power of the teachers' unions also impacts the principals' ability to use evaluations for their intended purpose of improving learning. Betsy commented:

This evaluation of teachers piece is all tied in with that union. If you want to use that evaluation instrument as it is intended, as a vehicle to make suggestions and constructive criticism, and improve things, that's nice in theory. However, when you have a weak teacher, you cannot call a spade a spade, because they will simply just take you to the union, and so what's the point? Put that in the battle-not-worth-fighting category....I have evaluated out a few teachers that were on non-professional status, but the professional status teachers, nobody's touched. (p.13)

Summary of Research Question #5

In summary, the following key points were made by principals regarding the impact that the Ed. Reform Act and their leadership role as principals have had on student learning. Principals saw both positive and negative outcomes of the Education Reform Act as it related to improved student learning. These included:

- Principals reported positive effects of the curriculum frameworks, stating they provided consistency across districts, standardized expectations for student learning, forced districts to raise expectations for student learning to a higher standard, and provided the impetus for some districts to begin a review and updating of their curriculums.
- Principals reported negative impacts of the curriculum frameworks, including the excessive time needed to cover all the curricular requirements; the loss of time to address more social aspects of the curriculum such as social skills, conflict resolution, and self-esteem; and the loss of local control of the district curriculum.
- Principals claimed that the continued review and changing of the curriculum frameworks, especially in social studies and math, has prevented some districts from implementing the state standards and/or allocating resources for changes in those programs.
- The impact of funding from Ed. Reform for curriculum development appears to have had a more positive impact in urban schools as opposed to rural and suburban schools.
- The impact of the MCAS test was seen as primarily negative. Concerns included the amount of time it took to administer; the focus on minute details and facts as opposed to larger concepts; the validity and reliability of the test, especially in small schools; the negative publicity surrounding the published test results; and the pressure it puts on teachers, students, and parents.
- Principals reported that their evaluation of teachers led to improved academic performance of students, but that many teachers were still resistant to making needed changes in their teaching practices. The teachers' union also made it difficult to use teacher evaluations as a means of improving teacher effectiveness and student learning.
- Principals felt personally accountable for student learning in their schools, but felt that the Ed. Reform Act had either not changed what they were doing before, or had

- had a negative impact because of the time demands, inconsistent frameworks, pressures, and poor publicity.
- Principals reported that their leadership roles had improved student learning in their schools, but focused more on the importance of social-emotional values such as recognizing and listening to students and teachers, and building a respectful school climate as opposed to academic successes.

Research Question #6: Changes and Obstacles

The last section of the questionnaire consisted of three open-ended questions that probed principals' perceptions of changes in their jobs, as well as major obstacles to educational reform as a result of the Mass. Ed. Reform Act. The questionnaire also surveyed principals on changes they would suggest to improve educational effectiveness in Massachusetts. These three questions were also incorporated into the follow-up principal interviews. The three questions were:

- What are the major changes you have seen in your job as a result of the Mass. Ed. Reform Act?
- What do you see as the major obstacles to effective educational reform in Massachusetts?
- If you could change Mass. Ed. Reform to make education more effective, what would you change?

In addition, principals reported on positive outcomes of the Mass. Ed. Reform Act in their schools, even though this question was not specifically included in the questionnaire or the interviews. However, given the number of responses, the importance of this topic

to this study was noted, and a new section created. These positive outcomes will be reported after the discussion of the major obstacles.

Major Job Changes as a Result of Ed. Reform

What are the major changes you have seen in your job as a result of the Mass. Ed. Reform Act?

The responses to this open-ended question showed that principals saw major changes in their jobs as a result of the Education Reform Act. They reported an increase in areas such as time demands, responsibility and accountability, workload, management tasks, responsibility for curriculum and staff development, communication, and stress and pressure. At the same time, they reported a decrease in job security, support and assistance, and time spent on instructional and supervisory roles due to the increase in management duties. Principals commented positively about some of the changes such as higher learning standards and expectations, more focus on curriculum development, improved community and parental involvement, and focus on school goals and improvement efforts. Negative changes reported included more managerial and clerical responsibilities, less flexibility and control of the curriculum, and rapid changes in curriculum and expectations without adequate resources and support.

On the questionnaire, 78 out of 94 respondents provided a response to this question (83%), highlighting the changes they have seen in their jobs as a result of the Mass. Ed. Reform Act. The major categories of responses are listed in Table 20 (page 185).

Table 20
Responses of Principals: Changes in Principal's Job

Changes in principal's job	# of responses	Changes in principal's job	# of responses
Increase in time demands	23	Changes in leadership role	7
Increase in responsibility & accountability	20	Changes in hiring and firing authority	6
Changes due to curriculum frameworks	17	Changes in principals' authority	6
Changes in communication/parent involvement	17	Changes due to teacher evaluation/instruction	6
Increase in paperwork	14	Changes due to funding	6
Changes from School Council and School Improvement Plans	13	Changes due to higher standards & expectations	6
Increase in stress/pressure	13	Changes due to shared decision-making	5
Changes due to MCAS testing	12	Influence of district/school committee	4
Changes in support/assistance	11	Negativity towards schools	4
Changes in bargaining/loss of security	11	Budget responsibilities	2
Changes due to professional development	8	No change	1
Increased work	7		

As can be seen from Table 20, many of these areas have already been explored in depth in previous sections of chapter 4. These include an increase in time demands, increase in responsibility and accountability with a subsequent loss of job security, an increase in reporting and paperwork, and an increase in stress and pressure, especially in relation to MCAS testing. One principal stated, "Too many meetings at night and after school. Name another CEO responsible for evaluation of professional staff, scheduling maintenance projects, getting quotes on equipment and doing bus routes, helping kids, and being an instructional leader" (46). Another principal reported, "Jobs I did not have before are now mine. Whenever a central office person wants to 'get rid' of a problem, it's mine!" (#41).

The changes that have occurred with the curriculum frameworks also mirror previous comments, with most of the principals seeing many positive outcomes from this

aspect of Ed. Reform, including higher standards and expectations, better alignment of the curriculum, and a new focus on the importance of a sequential curriculum. Comments from principals included, "increased focus upon curriculum - the positive in my view" (#39), and "more accountability - raising the bar for student learning - more parent awareness of the educational methodologies" (#50). One principal stated, "The best things I've seen are more support for early childhood education and a reversal of the pressure to dumb down the curriculum by slowing the pace and level of instruction for all students in order to benefit the least able students" (77). However, principals also reported many negative impacts of curriculum reforms, including the time it takes to align and implement the new frameworks, the loss of flexibility and creativity due to the detailed nature of the frameworks, the amount of time required for curriculum responsibilities which takes away time from other leadership responsibilities, and the confusion caused by the constant changes, especially with the social studies framework. One principal reported, "Taking over curriculum responsibilities has taken much of the time I once was able to use visiting classrooms and keeping a finger on the pulse of the school" (#24). Another principal stated, "I am working harder putting in more hours to get the job done. It takes a great deal of time to align curriculum and properly implement the curriculum frameworks" (#71).

One change in the principal's job that was reported by 17 respondents had to do with the amount of time it took to adequately communicate with the many stakeholders in Ed. Reform - parents, school council, school staff, the district staff, school committee, and the state. Comments included, "School Council and other stakeholders are in need of

constant communication by the principal" (#1), and "Far more work expected, particularly with School Council and communication with school committee. More paperwork and public relations" (#22). One principal stated, "More night meetings to foster community and parent support and evening training workshops and presentations" (#13). Principals also commented on the increase of parental involvement in the schools, noting, "More constituents have a say in how our school operates" (#20). Another principal reported, "More parental input which is not always of a positive nature. Many have their own agenda" (#76).

Much of the increased parental involvement was reported by principals as being related to the implementation of School Councils. Although principals commented that the additional responsibilities of organizing and chairing the School Councils was time-consuming, they also saw many positive outcomes, noting that they had "improved relations with parents and the community" (#56). Principals also saw the writing of School Improvement Plans by the School Councils as a positive influence in Ed. Reform, leading to "systematic upgrading of school's facilities" (#2) and "clearer annual goals" (#86). One principal commented, "Improvement plans have given us a focus which has been helpful" (#43).

An interesting change in their jobs reported by principals that wasn't covered in the body of the questionnaire was in the area of staff development. Eight principals commented on added responsibilities to develop and oversee professional development for their teachers, adding considerably to their job expectations and time demands. One principal described this new emphasis as "leadership toward significant professional

development" (#36), while another principal reported, "More stress realizing the importance of staff development, yet not having the time needed for it" (#49). Another principal commented, "I am required to be both manager and curriculum leader. I am also required to provide the professional development for my staff. The day to day management takes the greater amount of time, leaving very little energy for the rest" (#23).

Seven principals reported on other changes in their leadership roles as a result of Ed. Reform, mostly a change from instructional leader to a manager due to the increased reporting and time demands. One principal articulated his new role as it related to the change process in general, stating, "Advocate for change, sounding board for resistance to changes, liaison role with parents expectant of significant changes" (#36).

Principals also commented on changes in their authority due to Ed. Reform, either real or perceived. One principal commented that a change for him was "dealing with the perception that the school's principal has more authority" (#5). Another stated, "More authority, but a lot of it is surface and really the same forces of funding and contracts and local politics is pervasive" (#42). A third principal stated, "Higher expectations for principals. More people - staff, parents - feeling the principal is accountable for everything, but having little if any increased authority" (#87). Six principals commented specifically on the change in hiring and firing authority, commenting that they now had the authority to do this under Ed. Reform.

With all the changes in their leadership roles and time demands, principals also commented on the increased need for support and assistance in order to accomplish all the

mandates of Ed. Reform. One principal commented, "I believe that the Reform Act has placed added burdens on the principalship without providing corresponding support and assistance" (#32). Another principal stated, "More responsibilities. Less security. Less recognition and support. Feel more stress. Feel like we are forgotten" (#68). Two principals even talked about leaving the job because of the increased demands and lack of support.

Other changes in leadership roles were mentioned in the open-ended section that were also discussed previously in chapter 4. These included the impact of changes in bargaining power and loss of security, the impact of funding (3 positive, 2 negative, 1 no change), the impact of shared decision-making, the continued control and influence of the central office and school committee, and the negative public perceptions of schools and principals.

The interviews reinforced the changes in their jobs that principals reported on the questionnaires. Many of the areas were covered in other sections of chapter 4, including the added responsibilities and accountability, time demands, need for communication and collaboration, and lack of authority and support. Peter stated, "We've always had extensive collaboration here, but until Ed. Reform we never had community people on our board. It was with Ed. Reform that we brought three community people into the decision-making process that we hadn't had before" (p.17). Mark commented, "I think through Ed. Reform I've been able to make [school improvement] a positive thing here. My teachers understand that whether we like it or not, it's not going away and that we have to work very closely with parents and community" (p.4).

A specific focus for principals in the interviews was the change they saw in their leadership roles, including their responsibility as a change agent, advocate for students and families, instructional leader, model for teacher risk-taking, and facilitator of collaborative interactions with staff, parents, and community. Bob commented:

I see myself as a change agent....Because of Ed. Reform, I might have a committee and have some parents and teachers involved....We had some really serious behavior problems a few years ago, formed a behavior committee. For a year had as many as 12 or 14 people involved and changed some stuff, and that might or might not have happened quite that way before Ed. Reform. (p.5)

Mark reported that he has had to become a politician and an advocate for his staff under Ed. Reform in order to run an effective school. He said:

My job is to take care of my teachers. And be available for parents - kind of deflect that off of my staff so they can do their work. And I've really become a politician more than an educator. I'm stumping the community to get people to understand how terrific my people are. (p.4)

John bemoaned the many small tasks that had been placed on him as a result of site-based management, stating:

Those are clerical tasks that don't belong to me, but have been imposed upon me. The leadership piece that I enjoy with Ed. Reform is the idea of working with people through school councils, doing assessment of test results with staff, curriculum changes. I think that's a good part of Ed. Reform - bringing about curriculum change. (p.8).

Some principals commented that their leadership role had not changed that much since Ed. Reform, as their style matched with the demands of the Reform Act. Mark stated, "I had a commitment to involving teachers, parents, and the community into the decision-making processes at any school I've ever worked in. I didn't need Ed. Reform to tell me that was important" (p.2). Betsy commented:

We do have a collaborative kind of style here. I'm not sure that Ed. Reform is responsible for that. It's kind of how we work best. But I think probably, you're either a collaborator or you're not. If you're a top-down person and make all the decisions, Ed. Reform isn't going to change that. (p.3)

Linda reported that she had worked with her staff collaboratively on educational issues before Ed. Reform, but that the law had helped her focus these efforts. She commented, "We were doing a lot of it anyway, so I think we benefited from a little bit of the structure that was given to us and some direction that I think we really need to have anyway from some of the research and what it tells us" (p.2).

As in the questionnaires, another major change that principals reported in the interviews was the increase in work and management tasks with a decrease in support and authority. Emily commented, "This year the amount of things that we're asked to track and plan for and implement and assess and monitor and report is probably at least 50% more than last year, and I think it's growing. I don't think I'm going to see anything being reduced" (p.5). Linda stated:

I think it's been an incredible amount of work for principals. I think there are too many initiatives that are coming too closely together. Before we have a chance to find out if one's working we have another one. And, in trying to get so much accomplished, site-based management has become management of the site. I do less instructional supervision since Ed. Reform because of all the management tasks I have taken on. (p.1)

Principals commented that Ed. Reform had added to the principal's workload and responsibilities without taking anything away or providing needed support. Bob stated, "There used to be assistant principals. And you get kind of a financial consolidation somehow and more work. Which is typical of business, and maybe that's the business model we bought with Ed. Reform" (p.5). Joe said, "We have become the recipient of

everybody's dirty little jobs that they didn't mark throughout the system. School reform says the principal's in charge of everything....And they have given us everything without any extra help" (p.7). John reported:

I would have liked to see Ed. Reform mandate some things that I don't have to do. Take something away from me, not just give something more to me....It would be nice if Ed. Reform mandated the principal having an assistant when your school enrollment reaches 400. That's recommended by the National Association of Elementary School Principals....Ed. Reform has imposed more upon your educational leaders, building principals, superintendents, etc. and has taken nothing away. (p.8)

Summary of Major Job Changes as a Result of Ed. Reform

In summary, the following key changes in their jobs were reported by principals as a result of the Ed. Reform Act:

- Principals reported an increase in certain aspects of their jobs, including:
 - Increased time spent on the job
 - Increased responsibility and accountability
 - Increased workload and paperwork
 - Increased time spent on management tasks
 - Increased responsibility for curriculum development, alignment, and implementation
 - Increased responsibility for staff professional development
 - Increased stress and pressure, especially related to MCAS testing
 - Increased time spent communicating with stakeholders
 - Increased time spent on public relations and politics
- Principals reported a decrease in certain aspects of their jobs, including:
 - Decreased job security and bargaining power
 - Decreased support and help with the job

- Decreased time spent on instructional and supervisory leadership roles
- Decreased or no increase in their authority
- Principals commented favorably on some of the changes in their jobs that have come about as a result of the Ed. Reform Act. These included:
 - Higher standards and expectations for student learning
 - More focus on curriculum development and alignment
 - More support for early childhood education
 - Improved communication and relationships with parents and the community, partly as a result of School Councils
 - Improved school goals and educational focus as a result of School Improvement Plans
- Principals also reported negatively on some of the changes in their jobs as a result of the Ed. Reform Act:
 - More job responsibilities as a result of site-based management, including more clerical and/or managerial jobs
 - Less flexibility and control of the curriculum due to detailed state frameworks
 - More parental input which is not always of a positive nature
 - Rapid changes mandated by Ed. Reform without adequate support, resources, or time for implementation and reflection

Major Obstacles to Effective Educational Reform

What do you see as the major obstacles to effective educational reform in Massachusetts?

The responses to this open-ended question show that principals still see many obstacles to effective reform, despite the implementation of the Education Reform Act. Major obstacles included the teachers' unions; politicians and the State Department of Education; lack of funding, time, and resources; negative perceptions of public schools;

major curriculum changes; and continuing societal and family problems over which they have no control. Principals also saw many positive outcomes of the Reform Act.

On the questionnaire, 80 out of 94 principals provided a response to this question (85%), highlighting the major obstacles they saw to effective educational reform in Massachusetts. The major categories of responses are listed in Table 21.

Table 21
Responses of Principals: Obstacles to Reform

Obstacle	# of responses	Obstacle	# of responses
Teachers' union/contracts	20	Too many changes	6
Lack of funding	17	Hiring and firing teachers	6
Not enough time	16	Lack of resources	6
MCAS	16	Too many responsibilities	6
State Board of Education	12	Lack of support	4
Politics	11	Staff development issues	4
Problems with teacher quality	10	Charter schools/privatization	2
Lack of principal authority	9	School Councils	2
Parental and societal issues	9	Lack of leadership stability	2
Curriculum changes	8	Too much pressure	1
Principal job security	7	Understanding of principal's job	1
Negative publicity	7		

Although many of these topics have been covered in previous sections of chapter 4, it was insightful to see the ranking of obstacles to effective educational reform in Massachusetts. Principals saw the major obstacle as teachers' unions and contracts, reporting issues with both inability to fire poor teachers, and time constraints that limited their ability to work with staff effectively. One principal reported, "Teachers unions and a mentality of entitlement has not served our children well. More empowerment for principals needs to be a reality. If people want more accountability then we need the

authority to remove teachers in less time” (#8). Another principal stated, “Unions are still advising members to take stands that hinder progress” (#64).

The second biggest obstacle that was reported was lack of adequate funding. One of the principals stated, “Mandates for small schools with no additional money - the funding formula doesn’t take this into consideration. The School Improvement Plan has no monetary backing either, so no real ‘guts’ to it” (#22). A second principal commented, “Our town has not seen much of an increase in money and the town fails all overrides. We don’t have enough money for staff development or technology” (#43). In analyzing the responses on funding, it was interesting to note that 11 out of 17 responses on lack of funding came from suburban schools. Of the five urban schools that commented on funding, one principal commented that “funding must continue” (#3). Only one rural school stated that funding was an obstacle in this open-ended section.

Lack of adequate time for planning, instruction, and reflection was the third major obstacle reported by principals, highlighted by this comment from one of the respondents, “At this time the major obstacle seems to be time and compensation for teachers to collaborate and discuss their efforts, successes and failures experienced as they work to implement curriculum designed to be aligned with the Frameworks” (#75). Another principal expressed her frustrations with time issues by stating, “To enable children to learn through direct, hands-on experiences consumes a great deal of time while teachers feel the push to ‘get through the curriculum’. At times, they clash!” (#86).

As reported previously, principals were very negative about the impact of the MCAS test and the “misuse of testing results” (#50), and saw it as a major obstacle to

reform. One principal commented, "MCAS results are a political football. Students being tested on information not taught" (#30). Another principal who saw MCAS as an obstacle stated,

The impact that the results of an invalid, unreliable test will have on school budgets, educator's treatment, public school work and goals. John Q. Public will never understand the problems and inadequacies of the test - they will only see failing grades and then blame us. (#51)

Two interesting obstacles reported by principals in this open-ended section that were not included in the body of the questionnaire were the impact of the State Board of Education and politics. Both John Silber, former Chairman of the State Board, and Governor Paul Cellucci were mentioned specifically as being obstacles to effective reform. (It should be noted that since this study a new Chairman, James Peyser, has been appointed to the State Board of Education.) A particular focus for comments was the negative public image of schools and teachers that principals felt was promoted by the Board and politicians, citing a "lack of support and respect from the Mass Board of Education, in particular from the Chairman" (#32). One principal stated, "Politicians use education and educators to further their agendas with hollow rhetoric. John Silber is our strongest voice of condemnation" (#21). Another principal commented:

The current Board of Education is extremely divisive. They seem to want failure. Ed Reform was a fine initiative going in the right direction until Dr. Silber was appointed. It now seems that no matter how hard we work, and how dedicated our staffs are, we will be bashed by the media that plays off the politics of the Board of Education. (#69)

Principals were concerned that politicians and the State Board of Education were getting involved in areas that were better left to the schools, or being asked to take over

responsibilities that belonged to society, not education. One principal stated, "Our politicians use 'Education' for their goals. They want to have the schools 'fix' all the problems of our society - drug problems, pregnancy, lack of health care, lack of home support, violence ed., diversity ed., alternate life style ed., etc." (#52). Another principal commented on the Board of Ed. as an obstacle, stating:

The State Board of Education in that they are not acting as a Board should: i.e. make policy and adopt budgets. They are into curriculum, instruction, management, et al. The result will be, in part, more attempts at regulation as frustrations build with their attempts to control much of what is inherently uncontrollable. Expect more reports, more tests, and more regulations. (#39)

Principals also saw the Board of Education and politicians as interfering with school curriculum and policies without a clear understanding of the educational foundations and ramifications of their actions. One principal described this obstacle as "political involvement that changes the course and direction of educational programs, without the overall understanding necessary to make effective changes" (#93). Another principal reported many obstacles that he attributed to the Board of Education, stating:

Lack of a willingness to listen to experienced teachers and principals by the chairman and members of the State Board of Education. They seem unwilling to recognize the strengths in our teachers, principals, and schools, and instead emphasize the negative. They appear unwilling to consider that their tests might be faulty, unreliable, and invalid. They seem to have whipped up the politicians and the media to attack public schools for their own agenda: privatization of public schools. (#77)

Another category of obstacles to effective reform that emerged from this section had to do with parents and society, with principals reporting a number of concerns ranging from too much parental involvement to too little parental participation to problems of society that are dumped on the schools. One principal commented, "The

expectation is that schools only are responsible, the parental/home component is lost” (#21). Other obstacles reported were “Family issues/problems which have solutions which cannot be legislated” (#32) and “Parental absenteeism in this whole mix” (#53). An interesting obstacle listed by one principal was “A society used to too much of everything and satisfied with too little” (#42). Societal issues that effect students were also reported as an obstacle to effective learning and reform, with one principal stating, “We have far more single parent families, alcohol related births, domestic violence, and extended day care in the lives of our young students. We’re providing food, clothing, and nurturing like never before in my career” (#69).

Many of the other obstacles reported have been described in previous sections of chapter 4. These include lack of principal authority, changes in curriculum, negative public perception of schools, too many responsibilities, too many changes too quickly, and lack of support and resources. One principal wrote, “A lack of true building-based management. Also, the scape-goating of teachers and middle managers regarding student achievement. Principals are told they are essentially solely responsible for student progress, and that type of message tends to make one ‘timid’” (#15). Another principal commented, “Too much too soon tends to create a ‘working at the frustration level’ syndrome, a practice that we have known for years to be ineffective” (#34). A third principal stated:

Time and support to get the job done effectively. We are so bombarded with responsibilities that it is difficult to provide the “instructional leadership” piece that is important. There is too much pressure centered on the role of the principal. (#1)

One other obstacle was reported by a principal that had not been mentioned previously. He stated, "Education of School Committees and superintendents who have never been principals" (#60). This comment was interesting in that it reflects on the important, complex role of the principal under education reform, and the need for a better understanding of the impacts of Education Reform legislation.

The principal interviews reinforced many of these obstacles to effective educational reform in Massachusetts. All ten principals commented on politics and the State Board of Education as being obstacles to reform. Concerns included politician's lack of understanding about school reform dynamics, lack of knowledge about what's going on in the schools, bashing of public schools and support of vouchers and charter schools, refusal to listen to educators, and too much authority to regulate changes at the local level. Peter stated, "The State Board doesn't want to hear the criticism at all. They don't believe in people in the field that they really are smart, and that we know what we're doing" (p.8). Joe stated:

A concern I have is among the...government and the State Board of Education. There seems to be a dominant view based on their backgrounds and experiences that the public schools are doomed. And that we should be shifting more and more towards charter schools and private schools and voucher plans. I think that's very, very dangerous. (p.11)

Linda commented that "Politicians running the show is part of the problem. You know, when you have a governor who just wants to keep passing legislation after legislation after legislation without waiting to see how things are really being accomplished, that's a major obstacle" (p.8). Linda also reported that a group of principals met with local legislators to talk about Ed. Reform, commenting:

Senator R. came and we started telling him about Ed. Reform from a principal's perspective, and as a legislator he didn't have a clue how it was playing out in the schools every single day. He didn't know about the time, he didn't know anything about contracts, negotiations, lack of protection, any of that kind of stuff. (p.4)

Peter commented on the political nature of the Board of Education and the total authority they have to implement their version of educational reform. He stated:

Somewhere we have to rethink the role of the State Board of Education, and where it fits in. It's now [got] way too much authority. And it being appointed by the governor is, in a sense, so politicized....And then to imbue that body with so much authority also, without having a kind of check on it. And the legislators don't even have a check on it. That's a problem. (p.16)

Emily summarized principals' feelings about politicians and their place in education reform, stating:

Ed. Reform...needs to be implemented and carried through by educators, not by politicians....Unfortunately, politics and education have never made a good match, and they won't in Ed. Reform....Until the politicians realize that their place is not education, until they support educators who know what education is about, I just don't think they're going to see Ed. Reform. (p.8)

A letter about the change in mathematics standards from Glenda Lappan, president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, to David Driscoll, Commissioner of Education, reflects many of these concerns about the State Board of Education and politicians that were reported by principals. Lappan stated:

You established a process in Massachusetts, under the direction of a group of dedicated, knowledgeable, experienced professionals....This was an open process with input from professionals who work at many different places in the system, including teachers. Then you changed the rules and allowed a small group of people to alter the standards work of the committee....As a result, you have...caused deep distress among all those who work...to serve the needs of students in Massachusetts....We urge you to listen to all sides, not just professional mathematicians who have little knowledge of or experience in teaching students in schools. Their knowledge and their voice should be heard, but

it should not be the only voice, nor even the primary voice to which you attend. (Lappan, 2000, p.2)

As stated previously in chapter 4, principals reported other major obstacles to effective reform, including negative perceptions of public schools, teachers' unions, lack of authority and local control, funding, MCAS testing, and lack of time to implement the many changes that have been legislated. Joe stated, "Unless all the research on site-based management is hogwash, then I think the state has made a major mistake in dictating more and more from the Central level" (p.11). Bob commented, "I think looking at Ed. Reform that probably teacher contracts and financial pieces are the two major pieces that are concerns....The financial piece is critical there, I don't know what's going to happen with the union piece. It's frustrating" (p.11). Mark stated:

I think that they put too much money, too much resource, into creating the assessment of Ed. Reform, as opposed to helping us implement Ed. Reform. The feeling is, this is what we've decided you are going to do. Now work with your local community to get the resources to get it done. And they don't have it. And I know that money equates with improvement....It's very frustrating to me. Don't tell me what I'm not teaching, and then tell me you can't do it because we don't have the resources to get it done. (p.13)

Bob stated that "the public school bashing has been horrible. It's been the negative piece, and it's been a very popular thing, and schools have been set up to fail" (p.12). He also commented on the difficulty of having effective reforms without the ability to find good teachers and fire ineffective teachers. Bob reported:

The major significant pieces that despite any curriculum reform you do or any changes you make, if you still have teachers that it's very difficult for them to change and/or entrenched in some mode of being retired and still reporting for work...it's very hard to get things to happen....The whole teacher testing thing in my view is not going to help because many poor teachers can pass the academic stuff but they can't teach for beans....You just don't have the power to address

that and the state doesn't want to tackle it obviously, because of the union pressure. I think that's just really a major, major impediment to changing. (p.2-3)

Mary reported that an obstacle to reform is the rapid changes made by the state without a true reflection or assessment as to the effectiveness of the change. She commented:

Education changes it's mind so frequently they [teachers] don't have any trust in what you're doing. Every five years or so, and sometimes less, it changes, and no one goes back to say let's assess it and find out if it worked. And they've thrown some wonderful programs out which you're trying to stick in and keep, but if you mention the name...you're using something that's gone, that's not accepted anymore....So that really hurts reform. (p.10)

Joe also commented on the too numerous areas of change that the state is asking the schools to respond to, and the inability to reflect and follow through on the efforts that are being implemented in the schools. He commented:

The critics said, why don't you run schools like business? Well, business would never, never, run their business the way schools are forced to run, with so little supervision. Either that, or they cut out a lot of extraneous stuff, and focus on the essential product and delivery of that product, and the customer can forget about some of the trivia. We spend an awful lot of time on trivia. And very, very little follow through on last year's innovation. (p.9)

Principals also reported that many of the obstacles to effective reform that the schools get blamed for have to do with the make-up of present-day society and families, over which they have no control. Joe stated, "I think a lot of the reason we wind up with so many needy kids academically is there are too few homes where the parents have time to deal with them, because they're under stress" (p.12). John commented:

Politicians don't have a clue. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is to be measured by test scores, it's a joke. You have schools throughout this state that are in crisis that has nothing to do with learning. It's the issues and problems that families have inherited or created, the kids come to school with....And the

nurturing that a school provides a kid, which is essential, a safe comfortable, nurturing place is absolutely a prerequisite before learning takes place....Until you have a reform of society, your school cannot really have an educational reform. Schools, the composition of them, are a reflection of society. (p.9)

Peter commented about the societal issues that impact urban schools as they struggle to meet the demands of Ed. Reform:

The reasons for schools achieving or not achieving are really diverse reasons. And one of the things that's really clear is that when you have a very large number of [students] from the lower socio-economic levels in your building, the chances of you succeeding are not as great as if you have middle class or upper middle class students....And those schools have a much harder time. And yet, they had to compete, and so, when they don't score well on standardized tests, when they don't get recognition, it's not very good! (p.12)

Two other obstacles to education reform were mentioned by principals that were not mentioned in the body of the questionnaire. Linda commented that low school morale was taking a toll on the staff in her building. She stated:

People are working, working, working, working. They're doing everything they feel they can, but they don't know how much they're getting out of their work. You have to figure that makes for terribly low morale. People are exhausted. They don't know how much more they can do. And you see people constantly re-evaluating their skills to see how it translates into some other area. (p.13)

Kathy made the interesting point that the general public doesn't understand the complexities of school reform, and that principals don't do a good job of educating the public about the realities of their job. She commented:

I think because public school is something that everyone in this country experienced, there's a sense that anyone can do it....Our politicians, our president and first lady, cruise through a school and see a happy, functioning place, in most respects, and think, this must be easy. We're not our own best friends in the profession. I don't think we talk enough about how hard this job is, and what we do. We allow the media...[to] tell us that we're idiots....I don't think we serve ourselves very well, but I'm not sure how to do it, either. (p.13)

Summary of Major Obstacles to Effective Educational Reform

In summary, the following key obstacles to effective educational reform in Massachusetts were reported by principals in this study:

- Teachers' unions and contracts were reported to be a major obstacle to reform because of both time constraints for meeting and working together, and because of principals' inability to fire incompetent or weak teachers. These obstacles continued despite the provisions in the Ed. Reform Act that supposedly gave principals more authority to hire and fire staff, and lead their staff through site-based management.
- Politicians and the State Board of Education were perceived as obstacles to reform because of their lack of understanding of the reality and complexity of school functioning and reform issues, their negative "bashing" and lack of support for public schools, and their perceived personal agendas of supporting vouchers and charter schools at the expense of public schools.
- Lack of adequate funding to implement required reforms was reported as a continuing obstacle, despite increased funding formulas under the Ed. Reform Act that were designed to increase funding to the neediest schools.
- Principals reported that the many changes in curriculum and assessment required under the Ed. Reform Act were an obstacle to effective reform, as they lacked adequate time for aligning, developing, planning, instructing, assessing, and reflecting on the numerous changes that they were required to implement.
- MCAS testing was seen as a major obstacle to reform, with principals stating it was an invalid and unreliable test that generated great stress on teachers and students, negatively impacted school budgets and time on learning, and added to the public's negative perception of schools and teachers.
- Principals reported that continued problems with poor families and societal issues were major obstacles to educational reform, and that the schools were often held accountable for these issues when they had no control over them.

- Other obstacles reported by principals included continued lack of authority to make necessary changes, too many responsibilities that impacted their ability to be instructional leaders, lack of job security, and lack of support and resources to implement needed reforms.

Positive Outcomes of Ed. Reform

What are the positive outcomes that you have seen in your school as a result of the Education Reform Act? (It should be noted that this question was not directly asked on the questionnaire or interviews, but is reported because of the importance of the large number of responses in this area.)

As mentioned earlier, principals also reported many positive outcomes of the Ed. Reform Act, even though this question wasn't asked directly. From the questionnaire, the comments from each of the five Likert-scale sections and the three open-ended questions were examined and a list generated of all the positive comments. While there weren't as many positive comments as negative ones, it's still important to note the areas that principals felt were working under Ed. Reform. These areas are listed in Table 22.

Table 22
Responses of Principals: Positive Outcomes of Ed. Reform

Positive Outcomes	# of responses		Positive Outcomes	# of responses
Frameworks/curriculum	9		Vision-setting/strategic planning	2
Better communication/collaboration	6		Has become educational leader	2
Raised learning standards	6		Funding	2
Able to hire teachers	5		Better relationships w/superintendent	2
School Improvement Plans	4		More budget control	1
Teaching more effectively	4		Principal collegiality	1
Improved teacher evaluations	3		More technology	1
Improved professional development	3		Focus on early childhood ed.	1

Principals made the greatest number of positive comments about the state curriculum frameworks and the impact they've had in their districts by focusing schools on alignment, ensuring consistency, and opening up a dialogue about learning. One principal commented, "The alignment of our curriculum to the state's curriculum frameworks has been a positive experience" (#5). Another principal stated, "The Frameworks have been an important force in real school reform" (#62). A third principal listed as a positive change, "The establishment of teams/focus groups to discuss frameworks, assessment, rubrics" (#64).

Principals also reported increased communication and collaboration as a result of Ed. Reform Act provisions. Principals reported "greater involvement with PTA and community agencies" (#91) and "More parent involvement through the School Councils" (#15). However, this increased communication also impacted on the principal's time. One principal stated, "Collaboration in general is a plus, but requires much more time" (#62). Another principal stated:

There are a large number of committees, each with large constituencies. The principal sits on and is the motivator behind many of them. While this has positive effects, it also pulls me out of the building and requires lots and lots of time and scheduling and detail work. (#42)

Another positive outcome reported by principals was the raising of standards and expectations for student learning, claiming "Ed. Reform has 'raised the bar'" (#62).

Another principal reported, "Teachers are raising expectations in order to meet the frameworks" (#50). One principal felt that more than just teachers were being held to higher standards, stating, "Accountability for all - parents, teachers, and students - are

held to higher, accountable expectations - no more excuses of lack of training, supplies, or lack of time on task" (#10).

Four principals also reported that Ed. Reform had focused schools on the way teachers were teaching and the types of instructional programs being used. One principal commented, "More hands on, minds on programs are being utilized" (#50), while another principal stated, "A need to have all teachers look at instruction differently" (#78). One principal claimed, "Much re-training of our veteran teachers is needed. We truly need to change the way we teach" (#5).

Other positive outcomes reported by principals have been covered in other sections of chapter 4, including the authority to hire their own staff, better focus on educational goals through School Improvement Plans, improved teacher evaluations, better professional development opportunities, improved vision-setting and strategic planning, and better funding for some schools. Comments from principals included:

I have been able to hire who I want as well as to suspend and fire since Ed. Reform. (#89)

I find School Improvement Plans to be a valuable tool in school wide goal setting. (#42)

This year marks the use of a new evaluation instrument/process that I hope yields more positive and productive views of the evaluation process. (#86)

As a result of Mass. Ed. Reform our district has undergone strategic planning for the district as well as elementary strategic planning for each of the 4 elementary schools. (#50)

I feel I can be an "educational" leader as I guide teachers in their professional growth. (#50)

I believe that Education Reform overall has had a positive impact on what is occurring in our schools. Funding to equalize foundation spending in communities has been an important component. Will the legislators continue after the 7 years has been completed? We need to continue the level of support that the state has provided. (#1)

One interesting favorable result of Ed. Reform reported by two principals was their improved relationship with the superintendent. The principals reported that they were seen more as leaders, and consulted about their knowledge and expertise. One principal stated, "I feel more respected for my skills as a principal and leader now that I sit and share goals with the superintendent" (#50). The second principal reported, "The superintendent is my friend. His predecessor certainly made me feel insecure in my job. The current superintendent realizes that in addition to leading my school I contribute ideas and programs that have system-wide effects" (#2).

The principal interviews supported the positive outcomes that were reported on the questionnaires. Five principals mentioned that the changes brought about by the curriculum frameworks have been a positive step in bringing consistency and high expectations for learning. Betsy stated, "I think in general it's positive, because...we need to have kind of a scope and sequence, everybody's working on the same page" (p.11). Bob stated, "The work in looking at curriculum and addressing some sort of standardization of curriculum is a move in a positive direction....The approach is still loose enough that it does give the freedom that schools need to have to do their thing with their kids" (p.2). Mary stated:

I think the curriculum frameworks are just wonderful....For someone to be able to look at them and know, this is something that children can do at that level, that's a

pretty good expectation, don't forget these skills. I think that they're a wonderful format. (p.16)

Three principals also reported that the focus on curriculum had enabled principals to work with their teachers to change the way they looked at teaching and professional development. Mary stated that she has been "working for five years trying to move teachers to...[use] differentiated teaching, being sure they know ahead of time what their goal is....Move to the hands-on, but also keep the minds-on...being sure there's good content" (p.1). Linda reported:

There's a lot going on in study groups...there's a lot going on in classrooms to see that the teachers have what they need, a lot of materials have been purchased. An awful lot of professional development, in-servicing, night courses, different things....And I do see some benefits from a lot of what we're doing. (p.1)

Joe also felt the curriculum changes had brought about higher expectations for learning, stating, "I think it's been effective in shifting toward academic excellence, away from enormous pressures to dumb down the curriculum. So I think it's really succeeded in there" (p.10).

An interesting point made by two principals was that Ed. Reform had pushed both principals and teachers to either change their styles or get out of education. Bob talked about "an older echelon of leaders that were autocratic and dictatorial", stating:

Some of those were effective leaders, but it's a leadership style that's going away and Ed. Reform is driving that out. You have to do things differently, and I think that's very, very hard on...the old boy network....I think principals have changed more, and I think principals are younger, and they're also more diverse....That's one of the good things, in my view, that Ed. Reform is doing. (p.9)

Mark made the same point about teachers adjusting to changes that were made necessary by the provisions of Ed. Reform. He also credited Ed. Reform with forcing those that stayed to re-evaluate the way they were teaching. He commented:

It has opened the eyes of many, many people....I think almost everybody has come to the realization this isn't going away, we have to make some changes. A lot of the old-line guard have jumped ship rather than make the changes. Which was a preferable way for people to go....So I think a lot of the dead weight left because of Ed. Reform and the rest of us, whether we liked it or not, were pulled into looking at change and making it happen. So, that's good! (p.12)

As reported earlier, principals also felt that more collaboration was taking place in the schools between administrators, teachers, parents, and the community. Bob commented, "It comes down to better relationships, greater understandings of what's going on in schools. People understanding the problems, being able and willing to make changes and do things" (p.10). John commented, "I like what Ed. Reform did bringing education up to the front burner, to the public" (p.6). Urban principals also reported increased funding for schools, with Betsy stating, "I think with Ed. Reform the urban communities have gotten more money, and with more money comes the ability to improve programs" (p.5).

Summary of Positive Outcomes of Education Reform

In summary, the following positive outcomes of the Education Reform Act in their schools were reported by principals:

- Principals felt that the curriculum frameworks have focused schools on aligning their curriculum in a consistent, logical manner, and have opened up a dialogue about an effective scope and sequence for teaching students effectively.

- Principals stated that the Ed. Reform Act had increased communication and collaboration within schools, and between schools and the community, particularly through site-based management and School Councils. However, this had also impacted negatively on the amount of time principals were spending on the job and the types of activities that were taking up their time.
- Principals reported that the Ed. Reform Act had raised the standards and expectations for student learning, and for accountability for learning for parents, teachers, and administrators.
- Principals felt that the Ed. Reform Act had changed the method and focus of teaching, with a greater emphasis on higher-order, hands-on, student-centered learning.
- Principals stated that the Ed. Reform Act had helped schools focus more on school goals, vision-setting, strategic planning, and improvement efforts, especially through the development of School Improvement Plans.
- Principals reported that the Ed. Reform Act had emphasized the provision of better professional development opportunities for staff, and provided for more effective evaluation procedures for teachers.
- Principals stated that the Ed. Reform Act had brought about changes in how teachers teach and principals govern, forcing some veteran educators who couldn't change to leave the field of education.
- Some principals reported they had more authority to hire and fire staff.
- Some principals, especially in urban schools, stated that they had received more funding, leading to better programs and more resources for their schools.

Recommended Changes to Education Reform

If you could change Mass. Ed. Reform to make education more effective, what would you change?

The third open-ended response on the questionnaire asked principals to list changes to Massachusetts Education Reform that they felt would make it more effective. Principals' suggestions covered many of the same areas that had been discussed previously, including revising or eliminating MCAS testing, increasing principals' job security and support, increasing their power and authority to manage their buildings and fire incompetent teachers, increasing funding for the schools, reducing the influence of politicians and the State Board of Education, and slowing down the fast pace of change.

On the questionnaire, 77 out of 94 principals responded to this question (82%), highlighting the changes they would recommend in the Ed. Reform Act. The major categories of responses are listed in Table 23.

Table 23
Responses of Principals: Recommended Changes in the Ed. Reform Act

Recommended change	# of responses		Recommended change	# of responses
Revise MCAS testing	21		Revise Special Education	3
Increase principal security/support	17		More input from educators on reform	2
Revise unions/teacher tenure	15		Implement all-day kindergarten	2
Increase principal authority/control	13		Decrease class size	2
Change funding	11		Improve teacher early retirement	2
Improve staff training/prof. develop.	11		Change teacher recertification	2
Change frameworks	10		Eliminate school committee	1
Change Board of Ed/politics	10		Reduce paperwork	1
Slow down pace of reform	8		Focus on families	1
Change negative perceptions	6		More team-building	1
Longer school day/year	6		Improve technology	1
Change School Councils	4			

In looking at the responses, the suggestion made by the most principals was to eliminate or revise MCAS testing to make it more appropriate and reliable, especially for

fourth grade students. Suggestions for changes included revising the scoring standards, utilizing existing established national tests instead of the MCAS, using the results as a local diagnostic assessment rather than a state-wide comparison, and providing for “greater flexibility and adaptability for our diverse student population” (#91). Specific comments from principals included, “Make MCAS test more realistic in terms of competencies children need by end of grade 4” (#70) and “change the ‘high stakes’ testing for graduation - I’m afraid teachers will be teaching to the test in the next few years” (89). Another principal commented; “Try to get people to understand that MCAS and IOWA testing is a tool to help us improve instruction by assessing what we are presently doing” (#68). One principal wrote:

Omit MCAS tests - why not utilize already existing tests that have been established by reputable testing services (e.g. IOWA, CATS). We need to question the reliability and validity of this test; the enormous time it requires; the use of factoring in a “0” for absent students, just to name a few. The process has been and continues to be educationally unsound and intellectually limited. (#51)

Another principal commented on his perception that the MCAS testing was discriminatory against poor and minority communities, stating:

MCAS testing - grade 4 - too much not reliable - no accounting for \$\$ rich (read white) communities being compared to poor (read minority) communities. Testing nationwide shows significant gaps in these scores (countless reasons). Yet the yardstick of the state lumps all kids together for high stakes testing. Its not like poor kids can’t - it’s that they are statistically less likely. (#65)

The second suggestion to improve Ed. Reform was to increase principals’ job security and support so that they can implement needed changes without fear of retaliation, and have adequate administrative support to get the job done. One principal wrote, “Collective bargaining restored for principals so I would feel I had some protection

to be the educational risk-taker needed for real change” (#22). Another principal commented, “More protection for principals and more administrators to properly implement the Reform Act” (#27). A third principal stated, “Restore tenure to principals. The implied increased and encouraged risk-taking on the part of principals is impeded by the abolishment of tenure. Why take more risks when one has much less job security?” (#32).

The third suggestion for change made by principals was to revise their ability to get rid of poor teachers, either by revising the evaluation process to give them more power to fire incompetent staff, or by eliminating teacher tenure. (It’s interesting that, in the same section, principals called for restoring tenure for principals while eliminating tenure for teachers!) One principal stated, “Remove the professional level standard that is another word for tenure. Unions are a real impediment to progress” (#8). Another principal wrote:

I’d do away with “professional status/tenure” and allow principals to fire or replace teachers at will. The “removal” process remains especially cumbersome and if some of the deadwood could be removed, we’d all be a lot better off, especially the children! (#93).

Going along with added power to fire incompetent staff, principals also recommended truly empowering principals to have the authority to manage their buildings and make the decisions necessary to bring about effective change. One suggestion was to force the state to back off and restore more local control to schools. Principals also stated that they were willing to be accountable for student learning and performance if they had the authority to run their buildings. One principal commented, “Give principals

authority and protection and then hold principals accountable for school performance” (#90). Another principal wrote, “Give principals and teachers more say in how to manage and coordinate curriculum projects and programs. Our existing great curriculum plans are being thrown out the window with the state frameworks coming in” (#13). A third principal stated:

Truly allow principals to focus on education first. Site-based management has drastically increased our management of the site. Allow principals the freedom to truly manage staff - the courts need to back off in issues dealing with staff, student, and parent rights. (#21)

Many of the recommendations for changes have been discussed in other sections of chapter 4. These include increased funding, improved staff training and professional development, changing the frameworks, and changing the negative perceptions towards public schools and staff. One principal summarized many of these suggestion when he wrote, “1. More funds directed to the schools. 2. Upgraded training of teachers and administrators. 3. Change the social studies frameworks. 4. More local control.” (#19).

As in other sections of the open-ended responses, the State Board of Education and political influence in the schools were mentioned as areas that needed to be changed in order to improve reform efforts. One principal stated, “Major changes would have to begin with our counter-productive Board of Education....The MCAS testing would be a welcome component if it weren’t surrounded by the meanness and divisiveness flowing down from the Board of Ed.” (#69). Another principal commented, “Get rid of John Silber and replace him with a positive supporter of public schools who is willing to

acknowledge our strengths while encouraging higher but reasonable standards" (#77). A third principal had an interesting perspective on this issue, writing:

In order to be effective, change must be meaningful to the participants. Political agendas must be cast aside instead of becoming the driving force for change. Public education isn't "broken" at all and the Emperor really doesn't have on any clothes. We must be very mindful of the real reason for making public education the whipping boy. I speak from 25 years of experience on both East and West coasts. (#23).

Principals also reiterated the suggestion for more educators to have a direct say in the reforms, rather than having them controlled by legislators and politicians. One principal wrote, "Give classroom teachers significant representation on the Board of Education so that there is not top heavy "higher ed" representation making such important decisions" (#3).

Principals also recommended slowing down the fast rate of change that is being imposed by the state, and giving schools more time to carefully implement the frameworks and reflect on the changes that are being made. One principal suggested "Realistic timelines to implement frameworks and to be evaluated against those standards" (#30). Another principal commented, "I would like more time with my staff to carefully discuss the frameworks and their implementation for our teaching" (#79).

One principal recommended:

Work on one phase of the reform at a time for an extended number of years with intense, direct, state, on-site technical assistance at the district and building levels. Reading alone should take five years....Then move to the next area - probably math. Best practices in all areas should be showcased and shared throughout the state with incentives for independent improvement while reform is in progress. (#34)

Recommendations for increasing time also included extending the school day and school year, implementing full-day kindergarten programs, and adding on "4-6 full days of training for staff each year" (#2).

The principal interviews supported the changes to the Ed. Reform Act that had been recommended in the questionnaire. A particular focus that emerged again in the interviews was the imposing role of politicians and the State Board of Education in educational reform that needed to be changed in order to improve reform efforts. Principals also reiterated the need for politicians to be better educated about what's happening in schools in order to make better educational decisions about reform efforts. John commented, "We need educational leaders at the state level that are leaders of educators at the local level, not bashers....I think politicians don't spend enough time in schools to know really what's happening in education" (p.6). Linda stated, "I think legislators should be mandated to get input from people and to reflect that input in their decisions before they sit up on Beacon Hill and make their decisions" (p.9). Mary noted the importance of legislators actually coming into schools and observing what's going on. She stated:

I think politicians need to get into places other than just the school in their city. You can go from town to town, city to city and every school is doing it differently. And some are doing it well and some are not....And not that I want them in the schools every day visiting. But I think if your school is open, which we all are, there is actually no reason that they can't come in and say to a principal, tell me how your curriculum works, what do they mean by cross-curricular, how do you put the Internet into the classroom. How do the teachers feel about this. (p.11)

Principals also focused again on the need to take into account the social-emotional aspects of students' lives, which they claim has gotten lost in the standards-based accountability of the Ed. Reform process. Joe stated:

I think they need to recognize the importance of human beings in the process. If we ever lose sight of the needs of children as children, we are going to be on the course where Columbine is going to look like a circus. Because our whole society is putting too much emphasis on numbers, test scores, the financial bottom line. And they're losing sight of people. And I see more and more kids being alienated at an earlier age. (p.12)

John described the need for schools to create safe communities with consistent standards of acceptable behavior where students can feel a sense of belonging and support. He stated:

I don't see any educational reforms succeeding until you have a reform of society. And tell me if they're going to mandate that, and how....I think schools are the last public bastion of caring about people. And politicians, when you want the money from the state, what comes with it are the rules and regulations. (p.6)

Principals also commented on the state's support of charter schools at the expense of public schools, and recommended that public schools be given the same opportunities and freedom to develop and grow. Linda stated:

If charter schools are such a wonderful idea, freed from a lot of the rules and regulations, why the heck did we strap all the other schools with all those rules and regulations? They're coming from the state, which is telling you it's better if you don't have them! So, give me the same...largesse that you're giving to a charter school. Free me from a lot of those rules and regulations. Let me do my job, and maybe that's a key to it. (p.9)

Other recommendations that principals suggested to increase the effectiveness of Ed. Reform have been discussed previously. These include increasing the school day and school year, improving funding, changing the MCAS, slowing down the pace of change,

providing more protection and support for principals, and creating a more positive image of public schools. Kathy stated, "I think we need a longer school year, and I think we need a longer school day. But I don't think it's going to happen until the money for paying the professional to do it happens" (p.12). She also felt that reducing class size would have a great impact on improving student learning. Kathy recommended:

The money that is being thrown into programs, if it could go into the construction so that you have the space to cut down on your class sizes. And the general classroom teachers with a smaller groups of kids is gonna be the thing that really makes a difference. I absolutely crack up, though, when politicians start saying...they're going to hire 2,000 new teachers. Well, where are you going to put them? (p.9-10)

Mary made the interesting observation that true reform won't come about unless everyone is working together towards a common, understood goal, rather than pitting unions and politicians and schools against each other. She stated:

I think reform comes when everybody's on the same line and the same page saying, this is our goal, I have to give more time, you have to give more time, the parent has to give more, the community has to give more time. And if everybody were open enough and did that....So, true reform, I don't think it's ever going to come until they're all in agreement. (p.10)

Summary of Recommended Changes to Ed. Reform

In summary, the following key changes in the Education Reform Act were recommended by principals in order to improve the effectiveness of reforms in Massachusetts:

- Eliminate or revise MCAS testing to make it more appropriate and reliable, and use the results for diagnostic assessment of schools, rather than a comparison of achievement between schools.

- Increase principals' job security in order to encourage them to be the educational risk-takers that are needed to bring about effective change.
- Increase administrative support for principals in order to give them the time needed to focus in on the myriad demands of the principals' job under Ed. Reform.
- Increase principals' power and authority to fire poor teachers and to run their buildings in a true site-based model.
- Increase funding for schools for improved programs, staff development, more teachers to reduce class size, and to increase the length of the school day and school year.
- Reduce the influence of politicians and the State Board of Education in running the schools and controlling curriculum, and change their attitudes towards schools from negative to positive.
- Encourage politicians to spend more time in the schools observing the educational process and seeking input from knowledgeable members of the educational community.
- Slow down the rate of change and give schools more time to plan, implement, and reflect on key components of education reform.
- Take into account the social and emotional needs of students when planning curriculum reforms and placing demands for time and learning on the schools.
- Encourage the many educational and political constituencies to work together towards a common, positive, consistent educational goal in order to bring about true reform in the schools.

Summary of Chapter 4

The purpose of this study was to report on how elementary principals perceive the changes in their roles and their schools as a result of the Massachusetts Reform Act of 1993. The results of the questionnaires and the interviews show that principals are taking their role in implementing these reforms seriously. Principals reported that they are

working hard with their staff, students, and parents to bring positive changes to their schools by developing site-based management and shared decision-making, setting visions and goals for their schools, modeling and encouraging teachers to take risks and try new approaches to learning, implementing professional development opportunities for themselves and their staff, realigning and implementing the new state curriculum frameworks, working with teachers on more effective instructional strategies and methodologies, and supporting higher standards and expectations for student learning. Principals reported that they were already involved in many of these tasks before Ed. Reform, but the Reform Act had given them more power and authority to implement many of these changes.

The results of this study also showed that principals saw their leadership roles and styles as critical to implementing and sustaining these reform efforts in their schools. Principals reported on their roles as visionaries, managers, instructional leaders, leaders of leaders, change agents, and advocates for their staff and their schools. The principals in this study described themselves as facilitative, collegial, collaborative, supportive, open, and empowering. This is a change of styles from principals who were more authoritarian and controlling before the advent of reform. All of these changes in the leadership roles and styles of principals are cited in the literature as being necessary for restructuring schools and implementing effective reforms.

Principals reported that the Ed. Reform Act had focused their communities on the need for better education for their students, and had brought about many positive results in their schools. They saw the curriculum frameworks as helping schools align their

curriculums in a consistent, logical manner, and raising expectations for student learning and staff and parent accountability. The Education Reform Act was also credited with focusing teachers on more effective methods of instruction, contributing to a greater emphasis on higher-order thinking skills, and stressing more hands-on student-centered learning.

Principals reported increased communication and collaboration as a result of the Ed. Reform Act. Principals reported more power and authority to work with staff on reform tasks such as developing a school vision, setting school goals, engaging in strategic planning activities, and developing collaborative relationships with parents and the community. School Councils and School Improvement Plans were seen as major contributors to this increased collaboration.

Although principals reported many positive outcomes of the Education Reform Act, they also felt the Act had created many obstacles to effective reform, and had made their jobs as leaders of reform more difficult. A major concern was the large number of new tasks and responsibilities expected of the principal, and the impact these had had on the time required to do their job effectively. These responsibilities included an increased focus on site-based management with more time spent on day-to-day details, the alignment and implementation of the curriculum frameworks, increased communication with numerous constituencies, administration and analysis of the MCAS tests, responsibility for running the School Council and developing a School Improvement Plan, and increased responsibility for staff professional development. The increased time needed to accomplish all these tasks has left principals with less time to spend in the

classrooms with teachers and students, less time to focus on visionary and instructional activities as opposed to clerical and managerial tasks, and less time for educational discussions with staff and colleagues. Principals felt the fragmentation of their efforts led to greater stress in their jobs and their personal lives. They also reported that the increased demands and accountability of the Education Reform Act led to greater stress in administrators, teachers, students, and parents.

Principals reported that some intended outcomes of the Reform Act had not been realized. Although the Act legislated changes to increase funding for schools, principals still reported lack of adequate funding and uneven distribution formulas that hampered their reform efforts. While it was reported that urban schools had profited from these funding changes, many principals in rural schools and schools on the Cape and in Western Massachusetts felt that their funding had either decreased or not changed.

Another change in the Ed. Reform Act was the elimination of tenure and collective bargaining for principals, and a decrease in job security due to the changing of dismissal standards from "just cause" to "good cause." Principals reported that these changes had decreased their willingness to take risks and implement reforms in their schools, had decreased opportunities for collegial discussions and willingness to share ideas and concerns, and, in some cases, had fostered unhealthy competition between principals due to uneven salaries and non-standard contracts.

Other changes for principals instituted in the Ed. Reform Act were an increase in their power to hire and fire staff, engage in site-based management, and control their school budget. However, a majority of principals reported that these changes had not

been realized due to the continuing power of teachers' unions, superintendents, and school committees. Principals reported that teachers' unions continued to protect poor teachers, and made firing of incompetent staff difficult and time-consuming. Teachers' contracts also prevented principals from working with staff to plan and implement reforms due to strict guidelines effecting the availability of staff for meetings outside of regular school hours. Superintendents were seen in many cases as continuing to have power and authority over a principal's school-based decisions. The power of superintendents to hire and fire principals prevented some principals from taking risks and implementing needed reforms if they felt the superintendent didn't support their efforts. School committees were seen as continuing to micro-manage schools and exert tight control over school budgets.

Principals also reported on the negative influence and power of the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, and the legislature. They felt that these people had legislated reform efforts without any real understanding of the impact of these changes on a school's functioning and environment. Principals commented that too many changes had been legislated too quickly, and schools didn't have time to adequately implement and assess all these changes. Principals also felt that the Board, the Commissioner, legislators, and the media continued to promote a negative perception of public education that was damaging to the efforts of staff and parents to implement reforms and improve education.

This study found that principals perceived both positive and negative changes in their roles and their schools as a result of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act.

Principals also made many suggestions for improving the effective implementation of school reforms based on their knowledge and expertise. These conclusions and recommendations are discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

This study focused on the perceptions of Massachusetts elementary principals towards the changes they have seen in their jobs and schools as a result of the implementation of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. It also examined the perceptions of principals as to the effectiveness of the Education Reform Act in bringing about needed changes in education. Other states and cities undergoing educational reform have conducted comprehensive studies that assess the impact of these reform efforts on the schools and principals that are directly effected by these educational changes. However, no comparable studies were found that analyzed the changes that have been experienced in Massachusetts as a result of the Education Reform Act.

The review of the literature in chapter 2 highlighted the pivotal role of the principal in initiating, organizing, and directing the changes that need to take place in each school in order to bring about effective reforms. As the leaders in their schools, Massachusetts principals are in a unique position to report on the changes they have seen and to comment on the effectiveness of education reform.

The Education Reform Act of 1993 legislated many changes in the authority and the role of the principal, recognizing the importance of this position in implementing reform efforts. The general impact of the Reform Act on principals was to give them more authority in their buildings over staff hiring and firing, greater accountability for the successful education of their students and efficient operation of their schools, and a

mandate to establish participatory decision-making involving teachers, parents, and the community. At the same time, the Reform Act took away many aspects of a principal's job security by eliminating tenure, forbidding collective bargaining, and downgrading the standard for dismissal from "just cause" to "good cause."

This study found that these changes have had both positive and negative effects on the principals' job. The study reported on five major aspects of the principal's role, including:

- Collaboration and time
- Vision and leadership
- Implementation of reform provisions
- Principal support and stress
- Student learning

The study also found that principals saw many changes in their jobs as a result of Ed. Reform, identified positive outcomes of the Reform Act, and commented on major obstacles to the implementation of meaningful reforms in Massachusetts. Principals also recommended many changes that they felt would make education reform more effective.

Summaries of each of these sections were presented at the end of their respective segments in chapter 4. This chapter draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the findings which have been described and analyzed. Recommendations for further research on Massachusetts Education Reform and the principalship are also listed at the end of this chapter.

Conclusions

In analyzing the data from this study, five conclusions can be drawn relative to the implementation of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 and the role of the principal in implementing these reforms. It should be noted that these conclusions are based on the perceptions of principals in this study. Further research and concrete data would be needed to generalize these conclusions to other principals and schools in Massachusetts. However, the information obtained in this study provides a clear picture of the impact of the Education Reform Act on schools and principals that can be used as a starting point for further discussion and assessment of the effectiveness of the Reform Act. The five conclusions are:

1. The Massachusetts Education Reform Act has brought about intended positive reforms in the schools in many areas.
2. Principals see themselves as leaders of reform efforts in their schools, and are actively engaged in tasks necessary to implement these reforms.
3. The principals' leadership style has an impact on the implementation of educational reforms in their schools.
4. Some provisions of the Education Reform Act have had negative impacts on reform efforts in the schools and are seen as obstacles to effective reform.
5. Other obstacles to effective reform not directly related to the Education Reform Act continue to exist that impact on the implementation of educational reforms in Massachusetts.

Each of these conclusions will be discussed separately below.

1. The Massachusetts Education Reform Act has brought about intended positive reforms in the schools in many areas.

In this study, principals reported many positive outcomes related to the implementation of the Education Reform Act. A major impact was seen in the area of curriculum development related to the adoption of the state curriculum frameworks. Principals stated these frameworks had provided consistency across districts, standardized expectations for students learning, and provided the impetus for some districts to begin a review and updating of their curriculum. The curriculum frameworks helped focus schools on aligning their curriculum in a consistent, logical manner, and opened up a dialogue about an effective scope and sequence for teaching students. These standards for learning encouraged districts to raise expectations for student learning, reversing the trend of “dumbing down” the curriculum to the level of the least able student. These high standards also forced a greater accountability for learning on the part of administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

Principals also reported that the Education Reform Act had changed the method and focus of teaching, with a greater emphasis on higher-order, hands-on, student-centered learning. The increased importance of quality instruction has also led to a push for improved professional development opportunities for staff, and a greater focus on more effective evaluation procedures for teachers.

Another positive outcome was the increase of communication and collaboration within the schools, and between schools and the community, particularly through site-

based management and the formation of School Councils. Principals reported that the Education Reform Act had given them the leeway and power to engage teachers and the community in making sound educational decisions for the school. Teachers were actively involved in shared decision-making on topics ranging from curriculum to school goals to textbooks and materials. Principals stated that teachers showed an increased willingness to work with them to implement these necessary changes. The School Councils have helped principals establish goals for the school, implement specific programs and initiatives, and communicate more effectively with the larger community.

With a greater focus on effective instruction for teachers and collaborative leadership for principals, a perhaps unintended result of Education Reform was a change in how teachers teach and principals govern, forcing some veteran educators who couldn't change to leave the field of education. Principals reported a diminishing of the "old boy" network of more autocratic principals in favor of younger, more diverse principals with a more facilitative leadership style. They also reported that many veteran or "burnt-out" teachers chose to retire rather than change a more directive teaching style.

The Education Reform Act was seen by principals as focusing the public's attention on education as a priority, and being an impetus for needed changes in educational philosophy, policies, and practices. Principals reported that the Education Reform Act had given them the power and authority to work with staff on reform tasks such as developing a school vision, setting school goals, engaging in strategic planning activities, re-aligning curriculum, over-seeing school safety issues, and developing collaborative relationships with parents and the community, especially through School

Improvement Plans developed by the School Councils. These Improvement Plans have also helped to control separate agendas of parents and staff who try to push individual reform efforts that don't fit into the current school plan. Many principals stated that they were working on these activities before Education Reform, but that the Reform Act had helped administrators, teachers, and parents see the value and necessity of making these changes in order to improve the quality of instruction, student learning, and accountability for learning.

Specific provisions of the Education Reform Act sought to increase funding in the schools and give principals more power over their school budgets. In this study, 43% of the principals reported increased funding for their schools which resulted in the development of new programs, improved instructional materials, increased professional development opportunities, and more technology for the schools. This increase in funding appeared to have a greater impact on urban schools than suburban or rural schools. Twenty-six percent of the principals reported having more control over their school budgets as a result of Education Reform, giving them greater leeway to make educational purchases specifically for their building, and reducing wasteful spending on supplies and materials controlled by the central office.

Provisions of the Education Reform Act also purportedly gave principals more power to hire and fire staff. In this study, 30% of the principals reported having more authority to hire staff. Many principals stated they already had this power before Education Reform, while others reported having more authority to recommend a final candidate with the approval of the superintendent.

2. Principals see themselves as leaders of reform efforts in their schools, and are actively engaged in tasks necessary to implement these reforms.

In this study, principals reported that they are taking their jobs as leaders of change seriously, and are working hard with their staffs, districts, and communities to implement the basic provisions of the Education Reform Act through shared decision-making, staff planning and discussions, district planning teams, and site-based management. On the survey, 95% of the principals reported that teachers were working cooperatively with them to implement changes mandated by Education Reform, and 85% stated they were working as part of a district team to discuss and develop needed reforms.

Principals also reported that they were engaged in many of the leadership tasks cited in the literature as necessary in order to effectively restructure schools. These tasks included:

- discussing provisions and implementation of the Reform Act with their staff
- working with their staff to develop a school climate that is conducive to learning
- developing a vision or philosophy statement that guides the school's educational decisions
- developing and reviewing written school goals on a yearly basis
- developing leadership skills in other faculty members
- using knowledge of the change process to guide their reform efforts

Another outcome of the Education Reform Act reported by principals is the increased focus on the importance of professional development for both administrators

and teachers. In this study, principals reported that they are taking advantage of professional development opportunities to increase their skills and knowledge, and see these activities as providing personal support and affirmation for the work they are doing. Principals also stated that they are increasingly involved in designing and overseeing professional development programs and activities for their staff.

Despite changes in working conditions that decreased job security, 90% of principals surveyed still felt comfortable taking risks and trying new approaches and programs in their schools, in part due to the support they felt from staff, parents, and central office. Principals also reported encouraging and modeling risk-taking to teachers and students in an effort to improve effective teaching and learning in their schools. This willingness to take risks to bring about change is an important component of school restructuring.

One of the major focuses of the Education Reform Act was the improvement of student learning and achievement. In this study, 80% of the principals reported they felt personally accountable for the academic performance of their students, and 91% stated that the programs they had implemented had improved the quality of instruction in their schools. Principals also reported that their evaluation of teachers led to improved academic performance of students.

It should be noted that many principals reported that they had been engaged in a number of these tasks before the advent of Education Reform in 1993, and that the changes they had made in their buildings would have taken place anyway based on their leadership style and professional development opportunities. However, principals also

stated that the Education Reform Act had given them the power and authority to bring about many of these changes, and focused the school district and community on the importance of making these educational changes.

3. The principals' leadership style has an impact on the implementation of educational reforms in their schools.

As noted in the literature review section, the leadership style of a principal is a key factor in the successful implementation of effective school-based reforms. In this study, principals saw themselves as collaborative, supportive, open, involved, and empowering. They believed in shared decision-making and consensus building. They had respect for the skills and experience of their teachers, and had high expectations for quality learning. Principals also saw themselves as models for their teachers and students in taking risks and trying new approaches.

Principals also reported on the need to be a "people person" in order to be effective as a leader, and focused on the importance of social-emotional values such as recognizing and listening to students and teachers, and building a respectful school climate. Principals described one of their leadership roles as being an advocate for their students, staff, and schools. They saw this advocacy role as supporting and publicizing the strengths and accomplishments of the school to central administration, school committee, the community, and the media. Principals felt this was especially important in light of the negative publicity generated by the Education Reform Act towards teachers and public schools.

4. *Some provisions of the Education Reform Act have had negative impacts on reform efforts in the schools and are seen as obstacles to effective reform.*

While the stated goal of the Education Reform Act was to improve the quality of education in the schools, principals in this study reported that some aspects of the Reform Act had actually had the opposite effect by making their jobs as leaders of change more difficult, and blocking reform efforts in their schools. One of the biggest concerns for principals was the increase in their job responsibilities and the impact this had had on the time required to do their job effectively. The Education Reform Act added numerous responsibilities to the job of the principal, while taking nothing away. These additional responsibilities included a greater emphasis on site-based management with more clerical and managerial tasks, the implementation of the curriculum frameworks, increased communication with constituencies, development of a School Improvement Plan with school-wide goal-setting, administration and analysis of the MCAS tests, responsibility for running the School Council, increased responsibility for staff professional development, and, in some cases, increased control of the budget and authority to hire and fire staff. Principals stated that the increased time commitments to accomplish all these tasks had impacted negatively on their ability to effectively lead their schools and institute needed educational reforms. Principals reported that they were spending less time in the classrooms supervising teachers and getting to know students, more time on clerical and managerial activities, less time as instructional and visionary leaders, less time for their own professional development, and less time meeting with colleagues to discuss important educational issues. Principals also commented on the fragmentation of their

efforts due to the many demands of the Education Reform Act, and the need to set priorities for the work to get done since it wasn't possible to do all that was required of them.

Because of the increased responsibilities and demands of the Education Reform Act, respondents in this study stated that a lack of support for the principal was an obstacle to effectively implementing reforms in their school. This lack of support covered three areas - personnel, training, and resources. Principals reported that more administrative support such as vice-principals and curriculum resource specialists were needed in order to accomplish the myriad tasks made necessary by Education Reform. Professional development training was needed to help principals become effective leaders of reform with the new leadership styles and job demands required of them. Additional resources such as staffing, curriculum materials, technology, and instructional space were listed as necessary supports for the effective implementation of reform provisions.

With all the changes in their jobs as a result of Education Reform, principals reported an increase in stress in administrators, teachers, parents, and students as an obstacle to reform. For principals, this stress came from a variety of sources, including lack of support from the central office; increased responsibilities and time demands with decreased job security; over-emphasis on MCAS scores, especially in schools with diverse student demographics; difficult parents; demands of multiple and often conflicting constituencies; and a negative public perception of the work being done by the schools. Principals reported that teachers were feeling more stress due to the need to learn and implement all the new curriculum frameworks, the pressures associated with

accountability for the MCAS tests, and the negative publicity towards teachers as a result of the controversial state teacher's test and poor MCAS scores. Principals also reported stress in parents and students as a result of the pressures of passing the MCAS test.

The many changes in curriculum and assessment required under the Education Reform Act are another obstacle reported by principals. Principals stated that they lacked adequate time for aligning, developing, planning, instructing, and reflecting on the numerous changes that they were required to make in order to implement the new curriculums. Principals noted that the curriculum frameworks as written were so broad in their coverage of details that it would take an excessive amount of time to teach all of them in the classroom. Another negative impact of the focus on the academic curriculum standards reported by principals was the loss of time to address more social aspects of the curriculum such as social skills, conflict resolution, and self-esteem issues. Principals claimed that the continued review and changing of the curriculum frameworks, especially in social studies and math, had prevented some districts from implementing the state standards and/or allocating resources for changes in those programs as they waited for the state to finalize them.

The student assessment of the curriculum frameworks through MCAS testing was also seen as a major obstacle to reform. Concerns included the amount of time it took to administer the tests; the focus on minute details and facts as opposed to larger concepts; the validity and reliability of the test, especially in small schools; the negative publicity surrounding the published test results; and the pressure the test put on teachers, students, and parents. Principals questioned the need to use the MCAS tests when other

nationally standardized tests such as the IOWA and CAT tests were available. They also felt MCAS tests would be more effective when used as diagnostic tools by individual schools, rather than to rank the achievement of schools state-wide.

Another obstacle reported by principals was the loss of local control due to the demands of a state-mandated reform effort. This was especially noted in the area of curriculum development, with the state curriculum frameworks superseding district decisions on curriculum scope and sequence. Principals also felt that MCAS testing had impacted dramatically on local school curriculum and time efforts, with teachers teaching to the test while neglecting other important areas of the curriculum, resulting in whole units not being taught because of the added time needed to administer the tests. Some principals stated there were fewer opportunities for site-based management as a result of the Education Reform Act due to the district and state having more control over the curriculum and the pressures associated with MCAS testing.

Lack of adequate funding to implement required reforms was reported as a continuing obstacle, despite changes in the formulas under the Education Reform Act that were designed to increase funding to the neediest schools. This lack of funding or decreased funding was a particular concern to principals on the Cape and in Western Massachusetts. Principals also stated that the Education Reform Act had imposed new responsibilities on districts that impacted the need for additional funding, such as curriculum development and implementation; new materials to cover state-mandated frameworks, especially in social studies; staff professional development; and technology. Principals also reported the need for additional money to pay teachers for activities such

as curriculum study committees outside of the regular school hours, as there is not enough time during the school day to accomplish all the mandates of the Reform Act. Other funding obstacles were reported by principals. Only one-fourth of the principals surveyed reported they had more control over their budgets as a result of Education Reform, citing continuing control by the central office and the school committee.

Principals were also concerned about the amount of money that the state was spending on Education Reform for programs such as the MCAS testing, to the possible detriment of money going to school districts for additional programs, staff, and curriculum resources.

A significant obstacle to reform reported by principals was the loss of collective bargaining rights and tenure under the Education Reform Act which effected their job stability and feelings of security. Seventy-four percent of the principals felt less secure in their jobs as a result of lost bargaining rights and tenure, stating they felt they worked at the whim of their superintendents and could be fired without proper cause. On a personal level, only 50% of the principals reported that the superintendent had negotiated a fair written contract with them. Principals also reported a loss of benefits such as vacation time, sick leave bank, and salary compensation for years of experience due to the change in contract negotiations. Principals reported that the increase of responsibilities under Education Reform, coupled with the loss of job security, strongly impacted their willingness to take risks on their job. Principals stated that the loss of collective bargaining power led to feelings of isolation and competition among principals, and discrepancies in administrator salaries that they were powerless to control.

Competition between schools and principals and loss of collegiality were reported by principals as an obstacle to reform. This competition was fostered by the demands and provisions of the Education Reform Act due to factors such as vying for school funding, comparison of test scores, awarding salary incentives based on test scores, the loss of collective bargaining, and inequity in contracts. The loss of a support group of colleagues due to competition and time demands of the job led to feelings of isolation and a reluctance to share ideas, resources, and solutions to problems. As stated by one of the principals in this study, "the group was better than the one" in promoting and implementing effective educational reforms, but now it's "every man for himself and it's competitive" (Betsy, p.7), which hinders reform efforts.

The lack of qualified candidates interested in the principalship is seen as a significant obstacle to reform. Principals linked this scarcity of applicants to the lack of job security and compensation, the complex demands and responsibilities of the position, and the overwhelming time commitments of the job. While some of these conditions existed before Education Reform, principals reported they have been exacerbated by the provisions and implementation of the Reform Act. Principals in this study and other state and national studies reported that the lack of effective, experienced principals with job stability may create a leadership crisis that will effect the state's efforts to reform schools and bring about meaningful change.

Aspects of the School Councils were seen as obstacles to effective educational reform. Principals reported a lack of clearly defined roles for School Councils, and an overlap with the role of the already established Parent Teacher Organizations.

Principals stated that the advisory role of School Councils and their lack of power, funding, and budgetary control impacted on the effectiveness of the Councils in bringing about meaningful change in the schools. Principals also reported that school committees didn't always support the work of the School Councils, especially as it related to the approval of the School Improvement Plan.

The rapid changes demanded of schools, teachers, and principals as a result of the Education Reform Act were seen as another obstacle to reform. Educators felt that the Education Reform Act had instituted too many changes too quickly, making it difficult for schools to adequately plan, develop, implement, and assess new curriculums, methodologies, and procedures. This feeling of rapid change was especially noted at the elementary level, where classroom teachers are responsible for implementing all of the new curriculum frameworks. The continual changes in these frameworks was also seen as an obstacle to reform, as districts were reluctant to invest time and resources in a curriculum that would be changing again. Principals were also concerned that there was no attempt to assess the impact of all of the changes to gauge their effectiveness. With all of the changes coming from the state, principals also cited a lack of trust in the Department of Education to provide a consistent vision and structure for education reform.

5. Other obstacles to effective reform not directly related to the Education Reform Act continue to exist that impact on the implementation of effective educational reforms in Massachusetts.

Other obstacles to educational reform in Massachusetts emerged during this study that are not directly linked to the provisions of the Education Reform Act, but still impact on the principals' ability to implement effective changes in their schools. The Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, and state and local politicians were perceived by principals as obstacles to reform because of their lack of understanding of the reality and complexity of school functioning and reform issues. Principals stated that legislators aren't knowledgeable about educational issues or processes, and don't seek out information by talking to educators or observing in schools. This lack of understanding makes it difficult for them to understand the impact or effectiveness of the legislation they pass. The Board of Education was seen as being controlled by industry leaders and professors in higher education who don't have an insight into public K-12 education. Principals felt that the Board of Education and the Commissioner weren't responsive to feedback from educators in the field, and didn't seek out information that would assess the effectiveness of their policies and procedures. The Board, the Commissioner, and the legislators were cited for their lack of support for public schools, their negative "bashing" of teachers and public education, and their perceived personal agendas supporting vouchers and charter schools at the expense of public schools.

It's interesting to note that the Board of Education, which oversees public education in Massachusetts, is prohibited by law from having as a member of the Board any person who "shall be employed by or receive regular compensation from the department of education, or from any school system, public or independent, in the commonwealth, or serve as a member of any school committee" (Finnegan, 1996, p.15-1).

This leaves the supervision of public education in the hands of non-educators and professors in higher education who may not understand and appreciate the complexities and dynamics of the inner workings of K-12 schools, or the effects that a piece of legislation may have on the education of students or the jobs of educators. It seems strange that doctors are supervised by other doctors, and lawyers are supervised by other lawyers, for example, while educators are supervised by members of a Board who may have no firsthand knowledge of working in a public school.

Teachers' unions and contracts are seen as a major obstacle to reform because of both time constraints for meeting and working with staff, and because of principals' inability to fire incompetent or weak teachers. Teachers' unions also made it difficult to use teacher evaluations as a means of improving teacher effectiveness and student learning because of complex contractual issues and fear of litigation. These obstacles continued despite the provisions in the Education Reform Act that supposedly gave principals more authority to hire and fire staff, and to lead their staff through site-based management.

Principals reported that teacher attitudes and competencies impacted their ability to bring about reforms in their schools. Principals mentioned frustrations with veteran teachers who were reluctant to institute new programs or make needed changes in their teaching practices. Principals felt that some teachers who had been teaching for many years were "burnt out," and just showed up to work without putting any time or effort into the job. Weak or incompetent teachers with professional status (tenure) were difficult to fire because of the protection of the union and lengthy and complicated dismissal procedures.

Principals also cited the continuing power of superintendents and school committees as blocking their efforts to implement needed reforms in their schools. Some school committees continued to micro-manage schools, despite provisions in the Education Reform Act that limited their power to interfere with principals' site-based management. Principals reported that many superintendents still had control over principals' school-based decisions, and that superintendents often listened more to public opinion and politics, rather than relying on the knowledge and experience of the principal. Principals felt that superintendents' management and leadership style effected their ability to implement changes, especially if there was a mismatch between a more authoritarian superintendent and a more collaborative principal. Principals reported a lack of support from superintendents for their efforts to implement new programs or procedures, and a fear of taking risks because of possible repercussions by the superintendent if they failed. A weak superintendent was also seen as having a negative impact on the principal's ability to implement reforms and change because of a lack of protection for the principal, and lack of district support and leadership for school-based programs and procedures. Principals also felt that some superintendents fostered an unhealthy competition among schools and principals, leading to divisiveness and lack of collegiality.

Principals reported that continued problems with family and societal issues were major obstacles to educational reform, and that the schools were often held accountable for these problems when they had no control over them. Principals mentioned issues such as an increase in single parent families, alcohol and drug use and its impact on

children born to users, domestic and street violence, extended day care for younger students, poor parenting skills, lack of investment in education, and lack of respect for teachers and administrators. Principals felt that the effectiveness of educational reform was linked to the success of societal reform.

Principals stated that all of the issues and obstacles stated above have led to a negative image of public schools and teachers, leading to a lack of trust in the schools. This creates an obstacle to reform due to lack of support of teachers and school decisions, continued interference in the educational process by non-educators, support of private and charter schools by parents and legislators, and low morale among educators. Principals described one of their leadership tasks as needing to be an advocate for their schools and their staffs in order to bring about a more positive image of their schools with central administration, school committee, the community, the legislature, the Board of Education, and the media.

Given all of these positive and negative outcomes of the Education Reform Act, what do principals perceive as its overall impact on implementing educational reforms in Massachusetts? One of the principals made this concluding statement as he reviewed the data from the study and ended his interview:

I think, overall, looking at that data, it would appear that Ed. Reform has been more helpful than negative. I think there's really two things you're looking at. What has Ed. Reform done for kids and their basic education, and what has it done for the principalship? It's made our lives more stressful, I think, more difficult, but it's allowed us a greater opportunity to force those changes we know are necessary to improve schools for kids. So I guess ultimately that's good. It lit a fire under a much larger group of us who probably wouldn't have made the changes that we knew were necessary. There's your conclusion! (Mark, p.15)

Recommendations

This study reported on the perceptions of Massachusetts principals towards the changes they've seen in their jobs and their schools since the implementation of the Education Reform Act of 1993. The Education Reform Act has focused public attention on the need for a high-quality educational system for all students, and started the process of instituting necessary reforms in the public schools. This study found that further changes need to be made in order to fully empower principals to be leaders of change in their buildings, provide the necessary resources for implementing these changes, and bring the various constituencies together to work for positive changes in the schools. The following recommendations are made as a result of this study:

- Increase principals' job security in order to encourage them to be the educational risk-takers that are needed to bring about effective change.
- Increase administrative support for principals in order to give them the time needed to focus on the myriad demands of the principals' job under Education Reform.
- Increase principals' power and authority to fire poor teachers and to run their buildings in a true site-based model.
- Provide more time for collaboration and instruction in order to effectively meet the complex demands of the Education Reform Act through provisions such as extending the school day or school year, adding on professional development days for staff, and/or implementing full-day kindergarten programs.
- Increase funding for schools in order to improve academic programs, provide better professional development opportunities, hire more teachers to reduce class size, and pay staff in order to increase the length of the school day and school year.

- Eliminate or revise MCAS testing to make it more appropriate and reliable, and use the results for diagnostic assessment of schools, rather than a comparison of achievement between schools.
- Slow down the rate of change and give schools more time to plan, implement, and reflect on key components of education reform.
- Take into account the social and emotional needs of students when planning curriculum reforms and placing demands for time and learning on the schools.
- Reduce the influence of politicians and the Board of Education in running the schools and overseeing curriculum, and change their attitudes towards schools from negative to positive.
- Encourage politicians and the Board of Education to spend more time in the schools observing the educational process and seeking input from knowledgeable members of the educational community.
- Educate central administrators, politicians, and the Board of Education on educational issues such as the leadership role of the principal in implementing reforms and the dynamics of the educational system in order to give them a better understanding of the impact of their decisions and legislation relative to educational reform.
- Investigate the possibility of adding educators to the Board of Education in order to provide a better understanding of the complexities and dynamics of a school to the governing body that oversees the schools and makes important decisions about the education of students.
- Encourage politicians, the media, the Board of Education, and the Commissioner to have a more positive attitude towards public education and teachers, focusing on the many strengths and accomplishments of the public schools as they work to implement effective reforms.
- Encourage teachers' unions to work collaboratively with school administration to address issues such as the dismissal of weak or incompetent teachers, and the

development of procedures that overcome the contractual time constraints that impede effective discussions, planning, and implementation of reform efforts.

- Encourage the many educational and political constituencies to work together towards a common, positive, consistent educational goal in order to bring about true reform in the schools.

Recommendations for Further Research

In the course of this study, various limitations and topics were noted that lend themselves to further study in order to provide a clearer picture of the impact of the Education Reform Act on principals and schools in Massachusetts. Further research would also provide suggestions for changes in the Reform Act and/or public education in order to bring about more effective school reform. The following recommendations are made for further research:

- *Urban vs. rural vs. suburban schools*

A number of references were made to differences in funding and implementation of reforms in urban, rural, and suburban schools. These included the amount and effect of increased funding, the leadership role of the principal on district teams in larger school systems, and the continuing control and influence of the superintendent and school committee. The differences in the implementation and impact of the Education Reform Act in urban, rural, and suburban schools is an area for further study. This is especially noted given the poor return of questionnaires in this study from urban locations, especially the city of Boston.

- *Education Reform funding*

In this study, only 43% of the respondents felt that the Education Reform Act had increased the budget for their schools, despite a revised funding formula that was created to increase school funding. Educators on the Cape and in the western part of the state in particular reported no change or a decrease in funding to their schools. Further research would be helpful to determine if funding discrepancies continue to exist. It would also be helpful to determine how Education Reform funds are being used in school districts, and how much of the increased money is actually finding its way to individual schools.

- *Support for principals*

Principals in this study reported a lack of adequate administrative support in order to implement the many demands of the Education Reform Act. Other studies have recommended the addition of vice-principals and other support personnel once school enrollment reaches a critical number. Further research is suggested to look at the current administrative supports in place for principals, and to make constructive recommendations for additional support as needed. A related topic for research is the impact of being a principal in more than one school, and the effect that has on the principal's ability to be an effective leader of change in those schools.

- *Role of the Board of Education and the Commissioner*

The Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education were seen in this study as obstacles to effective educational reform because of their lack of understanding and support of the public schools. Further research is warranted to examine their role as

the leaders of reform in Massachusetts, including a comparison of this role to their counterparts in other states. The composition of the Board of Education is an area that could be looked at to see if supervision of public education should really be in the hands of all non-educators or personnel from institutions of higher learning. Further study might also include a delineation of the specific personalities currently in those roles versus the effectiveness of the governing structure of the Board and the Commissioner.

- *Education of politicians*

Principals in this study cited the lack of understanding of politicians about educational issues and the impact of their reform legislation on the schools. Further research would be helpful to ascertain the actual knowledge and attitudes of politicians towards educational issues, and make recommendations for ways to broaden their understanding of reform efforts and their constructive involvement in the schools.

- *Role of the superintendent on the implementation of Education Reform*

Principals in this study mentioned the continuing influence of the superintendent on the site-based management of their schools. The ability of the principal to implement needed reforms was linked in some cases to the support of the superintendent, and his/her willingness to allow principals to truly run their schools. Principals also felt superintendents were sometimes influenced more by public opinion and politics than by the expertise and experience of the principals in making programmatic and educational decisions. A weak superintendent also had a negative impact on the principal's ability to implement reforms because of a lack of protection and district leadership.

Superintendents were also seen as fostering an unhealthy competition among schools and

principals, leading to divisiveness and lack of collegiality. The role and impact of the superintendent in the implementation of effective reforms is an area for further research, especially as it relates to the leadership and site-based management roles of principals.

- *Advocacy role of principals*

In this study, principals described one of their leadership roles as being an advocate for their students, staff, and schools. They stated this was especially important in light of the negative publicity generated by the Education Reform Act towards teachers and public schools. This advocacy role is not widely discussed in the literature, and is an area for further study to better understand the complex leadership role of the principal in spearheading effective school reform.

- *Risk-taking in principals*

In this study, an interesting paradox was noted relative to principals' perceptions of risk-taking in their jobs. In one section, 74% of the respondents felt that "the loss of collective bargaining rights and tenure has made me feel less secure in my job" (question 3.12), stating that this loss of security impacted their willingness to take risks in their jobs for fear of reprisals. Yet 90% of respondents agreed with the statement that "I feel comfortable taking risks and trying new approaches and programs in my school" (question 4.3), and emphasized the importance of principals being role models for risk-taking and encouraging teachers and students to take risks. The discrepancy in these two perceptions would be an interesting area for further research.

- *Collaborative relationship of teachers' unions*

The negative impact of the teachers' union on the implementation of effective reforms is well documented in this study. One article quoted in this study describes a network of teachers' unions working collaboratively with administration as leaders of reform in their districts. Further research is strongly recommended to study the impact of teachers' unions on reform efforts, and recommend collaborative models that would provide a positive relationship that leads to more effective education for students in our schools.

- *Support for female administrators*

Female principals in this study reported a need to meet with other female administrators, as they felt the different styles of male administrators were not always compatible with what they were looking for in a support group. Much research has been done on the differing leadership styles of male and female administrators. Further research is recommended to study whether differences exist in the way male and female administrators relate to each other, and whether different support structures are needed in order to improve their effectiveness as principals.

APPENDIX A
PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

HOW PRINCIPALS PERCEIVE AND COPE WITH THEIR
CHANGING ROLES UNDER MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATION REFORM

Principal Survey - October, 1998

PART 1: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Number of years you've been a principal: _____
2. Number of years you've been a principal at your current school: _____
3. Are you a principal in more than one school? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, does this make it difficult to be an effective leader? Yes _____ No _____
4. Your gender: Male _____ Female _____
5. Number of elementary schools in your school system: _____
6. Student enrollment of your school: _____ Grades in your school: _____
7. School location: Urban _____ Suburban _____ Rural _____
8. Percentage of students in your school on free or reduced lunch: _____
9. Personnel available to help you with aspects of your role as principal:
assistant/vice principal _____ curriculum specialist _____ other _____
10. How would you describe your leadership style?

PART 2: SURVEY

DIRECTIONS: Part two is divided into five sections which focus on areas of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act that have impacted elementary principals. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Circle the letter(s) which correspond with your answer.

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree DK=Don't Know

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree DK=Don't Know

Section 1: Collaboration and Time

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| SA A D SD DK | 1. Site-based management has increased in my building since Mass. Ed. Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 2. Teachers are working cooperatively with me to implement the changes mandated by Mass. Ed. Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 3. I have adequate time in my job to focus on school improvement efforts as opposed to day-to-day management tasks. |
| SA A D SD DK | 4. I spend time in my school planning and discussing curriculum and instruction with my staff. |
| SA A D SD DK | 5. I am spending more time on my job due to the added responsibilities of Mass. Ed. Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 6. Important educational decisions in my school are made by a consensus of teachers. |
| SA A D SD DK | 7. I work as part of a district team to discuss and develop needed reforms in the district. |
| SA A D SD DK | 8. There has been an increase in collaboration with the community as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform. |

Other comments regarding the impact of Mass. Ed. Reform on collaboration and time:

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree DK=Don't Know

Section 2: Vision and Leadership

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| SA A D SD DK | 1. I feel the principal has an important role in implementing Massachusetts Education Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 2. I have spent time with my staff discussing the provisions and implementation of Mass. Ed. Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 3. I have spent time with my staff talking about and developing a school climate that is conducive to learning. |
| SA A D SD DK | 4. My school has developed a vision or philosophy statement that guides our educational decisions. |
| SA A D SD DK | 5. My school develops and reviews written school goals on a yearly basis. |
| SA A D SD DK | 6. I have worked with my school system to develop a vision or philosophy statement that guides our educational decisions. |
| SA A D SD DK | 7. The Mass. Ed. Reform Act has given me more opportunities to use my leadership skills as a principal. |
| SA A D SD DK | 8. I am comfortable with the leaderships tasks required of me as a result of the Mass. Ed. Reform Act. |
| SA A D SD DK | 9. In my role as a principal, I have helped develop leadership skills in other faculty members. |
| SA A D SD DK | 10. I use knowledge of the change process to guide my efforts to implement Mass. Ed. Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 11. I have made many changes in my building as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 12. If I left, the changes I've made in my school would continue. |

Other comments regarding the impact of Mass. Ed. Reform on vision and leadership:

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree DK=Don't Know

Section 3: Massachusetts Education Reform Provisions

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| SA A D SD DK | 1. I am familiar with the statutes and provisions of Mass. Ed. Reform as they relate to my job as a principal. |
| SA A D SD DK | 2. My School Council has been an ally in establishing goals for my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 3. My School Council has helped me improve the quality of instruction in my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 4. The School Council has helped me secure additional funding and/or resources for my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 5. School Improvement Plans have helped me improve the quality of learning in my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 6. The Mass. Ed. Reform Act has increased the budget for my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 7. I have more control over my school budget as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 8. The Mass. Ed. Reform Act has given me more power to hire and fire staff in my building. |
| SA A D SD DK | 9. My superintendent has negotiated a fair written contract with me. |
| SA A D SD DK | 10. I receive a written evaluation from my superintendent every year. |
| SA A D SD DK | 11. The evaluations I receive from my superintendent help me improve my skills and abilities as a principal. |
| SA A D SD DK | 12. The loss of collective bargaining rights and tenure has made me feel less secure in my job. |

Other comments regarding the impact of provisions of Mass. Ed. Reform on the job of the principal:

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree DK=Don't Know

Section 4: Principal Support and Stress

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| SA A D SD DK | 1. I feel that the superintendent listens and values my input on educational matters in my school and my district. |
| SA A D SD DK | 2. I feel comfortable talking to other principals in my district about school improvement efforts. |
| SA A D SD DK | 3. I feel comfortable taking risks and trying new approaches and programs in my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 4. I have the support of my superintendent for the job I am doing in my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 5. I have the support of my staff for the job I am doing in my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 6. I have the support of the parents for the job I am doing in my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 7. I have the support of School Committee for the job I am doing in my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 8. I take advantage of professional development opportunities to increase my skills and knowledge as a principal. |
| SA A D SD DK | 9. I have a support group of people I can talk to when I have problems that I need to discuss. |
| SA A D SD DK | 10. I feel added stress as a principal due to the demands of Mass. Ed. Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 11. There has been an increase in conflicts and stress in my building as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 12. Provisions of the teacher's contract and the teacher's union have made it difficult to implement needed reforms in my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 13. The actions and policies of my superintendent have made it difficult to implement needed reforms in my school, |

Other comments regarding the impact of Mass. Ed. Reform on principal support and stress:

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree DK=Don't Know

Section 5: Student Learning

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| SA A D SD DK | 1. The quality of instruction in my school has improved as a result of Mass. Ed. Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 2. The Curriculum Frameworks have improved the quality of education in my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 3. I feel personally accountable for the academic performance of my students. |
| SA A D SD DK | 4. The results of the MCAS test will have a major impact on the curriculum and instruction in my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 5. I have a greater impact on the quality of education in my school since Mass. Ed. Reform. |
| SA A D SD DK | 6. My efforts as a principal have a direct impact on the academic performance of my students. |
| SA A D SD DK | 7. My evaluation of teachers has improved the academic performance of students in my school. |
| SA A D SD DK | 8. The programs I have implemented have improved the quality of instruction in my school. |

Other comments regarding the impact of Mass. Ed. Reform on student learning:

PART 3: OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES:

1. What are the major changes you have seen in your job as a result of the Mass. Ed. Reform Act?
2. What do you see as the major obstacles to effective educational reform in Massachusetts?
3. If you could change Mass. Ed. Reform to make education more effective, what would you change?

Thank you for completing this survey,
If you are interested in participating in the next phase of this project,
follow-up interviews, please read and complete the following sheet.

APPENDIX B
COVER LETTER

October, 1998

Dear Elementary School Principal:

As a practicing elementary school principal and a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, I am conducting an extensive study of how elementary principals view the changes to their jobs brought about by the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. Areas of particular interest include what principals see as the greatest changes in their jobs (both positive and negative), what tensions and stresses have been added to their job as a result of these changes, and how they have dealt with these tensions in order to remain effective as educational leaders in their schools.

Enclosed is a survey which is the first phase of this study. Your responses will be helpful in exploring the major issues and concerns currently facing elementary school principals as they work to implement education reform. Because I am using a representative sample of elementary principals, your participation in this survey is vital to its success. Please complete the enclosed survey, which should take about 20-30 minutes, and return it in the enclosed envelope. Your completion and return of the survey will be considered an indication of your consent to participate.

For the second phase of this study, I will be conducting in-depth, 60-90 minute interviews with selected principals in order to further explore the information obtained in the surveys. If you are willing to participate in this interview process, please sign and return the consent form at the end of the survey. Not all respondents who indicate their willingness to be interviewed will be selected. There is a minor risk of loss of confidentiality; by signing your name to the interview consent form, your survey responses will no longer be anonymous. However, I will be the only person collecting and analyzing the data. The information reported in the final research document will not identify any individuals or schools by name.

As a principal, I understand how busy you are, and appreciate your willingness to participate in this important study. Hopefully, the results of this research will provide insights into future training, supports, and legislation that will help us be more effective in our jobs as educational leaders in our schools. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at work at (508) 836-7750 or at home at (508) 393-5729.

Sincerely,

Nancy R. Spitulnik
Principal, Hastings Elementary School
Westborough, Massachusetts

APPENDIX C
FOLLOW-UP POSTCARD

Dear Elementary Principal,

You were recently sent a survey on How Elementary Principals Perceive Changes in Their Roles and Schools as a Result of Massachusetts Education Reform. If you have returned this survey, thank you.

If you haven't returned your survey, your input would still be very valuable for my study. Thank you for your participation.

Nancy Spitulnik, Principal
Hastings School, Westborough

APPENDIX D
CONSENT FORM

**How Elementary Principals Perceive the Changes in Their Roles
and Their Schools as a Result of Massachusetts Education Reform**

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

I would be interested in participating in the follow-up interviews to this research study on elementary principals and education reform. I realize I am under no obligation to participate in the interview and have the right to say "no." I understand that not all principals who agree to participate in the interviews will be selected.

I also understand there is a minor risk of loss of confidentiality by signing my name to the consent form, since my responses will no longer be anonymous. I understand that the information reported in the final research document will not identify any individuals or schools by name.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed name _____

Work phone _____ Home Phone _____

Please return this consent form with the completed survey in the stamped envelope provided. Thank you for your interest.

APPENDIX E

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Principal Interviews

Principal _____ Date _____
School _____ Size _____ Grades _____ U S R
Number of years as principal _____ Number in this school _____

1. In general, what are your feelings about the Mass. Ed. Reform Act?
2. Do you feel you are implementing the basic tenets of Ed. Reform?
3. Has Ed. Reform effected the way you do collaboration and site-based management in your school?
4. Has Ed. Reform effected the amount of time you spend on your job?
5. How do you perceive your role as an educational leader under Ed. Reform? Has it changed since before Ed. Reform?
6. Do you feel comfortable taking risks as a principal? Trying innovative approaches, programs?
7. Do you see yourself as a visionary leader? What effect has Ed. Reform had on that aspect of your job?
8. Ed Reform changed many of the working conditions for principals such as loss of tenure, elimination of collective bargaining, dismissal for good cause. How do you feel about these changes, and how have they effected your job as a principal?
9. Do you feel more stress in your job as a result of Ed. Reform? What is your greatest source of stress?
10. How have you coped with this stress? What supports do you have in place?
11. Do you feel that your leadership role as a principal has improved student learning in your school?
12. Do you feel the Ed. Reform Act has been effective in bringing about needed educational reforms in Massachusetts?
13. What do you feel are some of the obstacles to effective reform? (teachers' unions, relationship with superintendent)?
14. How would you change the Ed. Reform Act to bring about more effective reform?
15. Specific questions from questionnaire:
16. Any last thoughts on the impact of Ed. Reform on your job as principal that I haven't covered?

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